

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 28, 2026

The Honorable Cheryl Mason  
Chair  
Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency  
1750 H Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Chair Mason:

President Donald Trump's costly, reckless and illegal war against Iran is nearing its fourth month with no planned off ramps, as most recently evidenced by U.S. strikes in Iran the morning of May 28, 2026, followed by retaliatory Iranian attacks targeting U.S. servicemembers in Kuwait.

As you are aware, Federal law requires you—as Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE)—to designate a lead inspector general (IG) to coordinate the independent review of Operation Epic Fury (OEFU) and ongoing operations in and around Iran. Specifically, section 419 of title 5, United States Code (5 U.S.C. §419) mandates that you designate an IG no later than 30 days after the commencement or designation of a military operation as an overseas contingency operation (OCO) that lasts, or is expected to last, more than 60 days.

President Trump's unauthorized and ongoing actions against Iran satisfy the statutory definition of a contingency operation under section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code both because the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) designated OEFU as such—as reflected in DoD's categorization of OEFU as an OCO in the Defense Casualty Analysis System—and because the contingency operation involves the federalization of National Guard units to Title 10 active duty during a declared national emergency with respect to Iran. Military operations very similar to those in the days prior to the cessation of OEFU have continued and exceeded 60 days at the end of April, triggering your statutory obligations under title 5. This applies even if DoD violated its own obligation to provide you with written notification regarding the commencement or designation of the OEFU OCO and successor operations that constitute an OCO.

IG quarterly reporting, audits, inspections and investigations related to OCOs have promoted valuable transparency and accountability across presidential administrations and enable Federal agencies to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars. The need for you to appoint a lead IG to advance these aims and conduct joint, comprehensive and independent oversight of contingency operations against Iran has never been greater, as the Trump administration's explanations of the President's purported mission, lines of effort and desired end states with respect to Iran are constantly shifting, and often contradict themselves.

From regime change, to eliminating the threat of Iran's nuclear program—which President Trump just months ago claimed was “completely and totally obliterated”—the Trump administration cannot keep its story straight. President Trump recently admitted in a televised

interview that he is willing to allow Iran to maintain uranium stockpiles, and that his previous plans to secure the material were “more for public relations than it is for anything else”—even though President Trump’s stated goal of eliminating any possibility of Iran having a nuclear weapon requires eliminating its stockpile.


No matter how much the Trump administration engages in semantic games to avoid oversight and accountability, the reality remains: overseas contingency operations in or around Iran are ongoing, with U.S. Armed Forces carrying out a blockade of Iranian ports, the two countries exchanging strikes as recently as today and the Commander in Chief publicly issuing a threat to carry out a “full, large-scale assault of Iran on a moment’s notice” merely hours after he disclosed halting a military strike against Iran scheduled for May 18, 2026.

CIGIE’s precedent of continuing joint oversight in Iraq and Afghanistan as operations unfolded under discrete stages and names recognizes the importance of sustained focus and continuity when conducting reviews of these overseas activities. It is vital that you demonstrate resolute leadership and integrity in adhering to the letter and spirit of the law, even if the Trump administration violated the law’s notification requirements and even when it falsely claims that careful naming negates the reality of ongoing military operations in or near Iran. In both cases, your legal obligations under 5 U.S.C. §419(a)(1) persist due to the overseas location, duration and character of the operations. Simply put, CIGIE has a responsibility to see through this administration’s charade.

I respectfully request that you fulfill your duties under Federal law and immediately designate a lead IG to coordinate comprehensive and independent oversight of the war against Iran and related United States Government activities, including the ongoing blockade. If you have already done so in a classified format, I ask that you inform us in appropriate channels and disclose to the American people publicly.

I ask that you inform me of the lead IG you designated pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §419 by June 5, 2026, and provide me with a copy of all written notifications you have received from DoD regarding operations involving Iran since January 20, 2025, including written notification provided by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to section 113(n) of title 10, United States Code, regarding OEFU or any related operation. Additionally, I ask that you instruct your designated lead IG to brief me on its joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of this war and any resources or authorities they need from Congress to accomplish that work no later than June 26, 2026.

Sincerely,

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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator