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# House Intelligence Committee Releases Letters from Intelligence Community Inspector General

Washington, September 19, 2019

**Washington D.C.** – Today, following a closed briefing, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence released letters received from the Intelligence Community Inspector General (IC IG).

The first letter sent on September 9, 2019 can be found [here](#), and the second letter sent on September 17, 2019 can be found [here](#). The Committee also released a [letter](#) sent late Wednesday to Acting Director of National Intelligence confirming his testimony on Thursday, September 26, 2019.

### Following the closed briefing, Chairman Schiff delivered the following remarks:

I wanted to make some preliminary comments.

First of all, I want to thank the whistleblower for coming forward, for having the courage to follow the procedures as they're written in law, to follow the procedure for full disclosure to the Congress and to the Inspector General, of conduct that was gravely concerning to the whistleblower.

Under the law, when a whistle blower does that, the Inspector General has two weeks to investigate that complaint to determine if it is urgent and credible, and to forward that complaint to the Director of National Intelligence. The Inspector General made exactly those determinations, found that this was within the jurisdiction of the Director of National Intelligence, that it was an urgent matter, and it met the statutory requirements that it dealt with a serious or flagrant abuse, violation of law or other misconduct or misuse of resources.

What then is supposed to happen is the Director of National Intelligence has seven days to review the complaint and then they shall provide to the Congress. And they shall instruct through the Inspector General, the whistleblower - how the whistleblower can come directly to Congress. In the absence of that whistleblower law, there is no lawful mechanism for the intelligence community employer, detailee, or contractor to raise a complaint of serious misconduct. The whole point of the whistle blower statute is not only to encourage those to report problems, abuses, violations of laws, but also to have a legal mechanism to do so and not to disclose classified information, because there is no other remedy.

That whole purpose is being frustrated here because the Director of National Intelligence has made the unprecedented decision not to share the complaint with Congress. We were informed of this fact after the seven day period, in which the Director has to review it and submit it to Congress, had expired. No complaint was provided and the Inspector General felt it necessary to inform the Congress that that complaint was being withheld. In the absence of the actions – and I want to thank the Inspector General – in the absence of his actions in coming to our Committee, we might have never known there was a whistleblower complaint alleging an urgent concern.

We will be releasing the Inspector General's letters, but I want to read one sentence from them. Mr. Atkinson wrote:

*"I set forth the reasons for my concluding that this subject matter involved in the complainant's disclosure not only falls within the DNI's jurisdiction, but relates to one of the most significant and important of the DNI's responsibilities to the American people."*

This is what's being withheld from Congress right now. We do know that the Department of Justice has been involved in the decision to withhold that information from Congress. We do not know, because we cannot get an answer to the question, about whether the White House is also involved in preventing this information from coming to Congress. We do not have the complaint, we do not know whether the press reports are accurate or inaccurate about the contents of that complaint.

But what I do know is this: if, in a matter within the jurisdiction of the Director of National Intelligence, you have an employee of that community, or a contractor or detailee, who follows the law and makes a complaint, and it is possible for the subject of that complaint to essentially quash the complaint or keep it from Congress, then this system is badly broken. Now I don't think this is a problem of the law - I think the law is written very clearly, I think the law is just fine. The problem lies elsewhere. And we're determined to do everything we can to determine what this urgent concern is, to make sure that the national security is protected, and to make sure that this whistleblower is protected. Because the impact of this opinion, which the Department of Justice has been unwilling to share with us, the impact of this opinion is if the Department of Justice decides that an employee of the Intelligence Committee who comes forward, who follows the law and follows the process, is nonetheless outside the process - they're not protected. Which not only means this whistleblower is not protected, it means no whistleblower is protected. That is the danger of the DOJ's misinterpretation of the law.

So that is where we are right now. Next week, we will have an open hearing with the Director of National Intelligence, where he can explain to the country why he believes this urgent concern should not be shared with the Congress. But that's where we are. I'd be happy to respond to a few questions.

Schiff answered questions on topics including whether the White House or the President himself are pressuring the Acting Director of National Intelligence not to hand this information over, the substance of the complaint and who the complaint involves.

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Minority Privacy Policy

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