

MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MITT ROMNEY, UTAH
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHNNY ISAKSON, GEORGIA
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
TED CRUZ, TEXAS

ROBERT MENENDEZ, NEW JERSEY
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
TIM Kaine, VIRGINIA
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

October 11, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Nearly two months ago, the State Department Inspector General (OIG) released a report detailing how career public servants were subjected to targeting and retaliation, based on their perceived political affiliations and loyalty—factors that have no place in federal government.¹ In particular, the OIG found that Assistant Secretary Moley, the head of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) not only allowed, but facilitated and engaged in this unacceptable behavior. Despite these clear findings, however, Assistant Secretary Moley remains in his position, and in a position of leadership. This is unacceptable. As Secretary, you must send the message that any retaliation will not be tolerated and that perpetrators of such actions will be held fully accountable. As such, I call on you to immediately terminate Assistant Secretary Moley from his position as Assistant Secretary and as an employee of the Department.

In its August 2019 report, the OIG found that Assistant Secretary Moley “made inappropriate accusations of disloyalty and made positive or negative comments about employees based on perceived political views,” behavior which clearly violates Department policies. He also “frequently berated employees” and “generally engaged in unprofessional behavior toward staff.” Despite numerous complaints, Assistant Secretary Moley failed to change his conduct. According to the OIG, his mistreatment of staff contributed to a rock bottom morale and led to an exodus of approximately 50 employees since he began his position in March 2018.

While the OIG’s report should have prompted Assistant Secretary Moley to resign, you have the authority to terminate employment based on this type of unlawful and reprehensible conduct. In fact, one of your predecessors, Secretary Colin Powell, asked for the resignation of a presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed official in 2002, after a Justice Department investigation found she misused her position of power at the Department.² This belies the Department’s reported excuse to date—that the Secretary lacks the authority to dismiss a State Department official appointed by a president.³

¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Aug. 2019.

² Susan Schmidt & Glenn Kessler, “Powell Seeks Top Consular Official’s Resignation,” The Washington Post, July 11, 2002, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/07/11/powell-seeks-top-consular-officials-resignation/ee5ffad0-b296-4537-addb-d6b345f4acda/>

³ Colum Lynch & Robbie Gramer, “State Department Failed to Shield Its Diplomats From Political Reprisals, Officials Concede,” Foreign Policy, Sept. 3, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/03/state-department-failed-to->

Moreover, the Department's response stands in contrast to other officials who have been asked to leave or resigned in the face of evidence of misconduct, such as Dr. Kiron Skinner and former Chief of Protocol Sean Lawler.

In comments to staff in late August, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale acknowledged that what employees faced in IO was "completely unacceptable" and that "[m]isconduct is a soft word, frankly, to use for what has occurred."⁴ And yet, Assistant Secretary Moley remains at the Department. This is an unexplainable insult to the Department, especially employees who remain in IO.

Politicization of our national security and foreign policy has no business in our government. In your May 23 appearance before Congress last year, you stated you did not believe State Department officials who targeted career employees for retaliation should be working at the Department. I urge you to live up to your own words and take the action necessary to preserve the integrity of the institution.

The IG's report also called for the Department to develop a corrective action plan within 60 days to "address the leadership and management deficiencies" within IO. That date is next week. I therefore request a briefing by the Under Secretary for Management on the steps taken to address retaliation at the Department, including in IO by October 21.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member

[shield-its-diplomats-from-political-reprisals-officials-concede-mari-stull-kevin-moley-international-organizations-inspector-general-report-controversy-diplomacy/](#).

⁴ *Ibid.*