

UNITED STATES SENATE

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TOP GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG FOR AFGHANISTAN RESIGNS

*Senators express frustration with administration's failure
to act sooner*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A bipartisan group of four senators today applauded the resignation of the government watchdog responsible for investigating waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan after months of Congressional pressure amid mounting evidence of incompetence and mismanagement. Over the past two years, U.S. Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Tom Coburn (R-OK), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Charles Grassley (R-IA) have repeatedly raised concerns regarding the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)'s performance, but actions last year by Fields spurred the senators to more aggressively press the President for action. In September, the senators sent a letter asking the President to remove Arnold Fields as the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

“With billions of dollars being spent in Afghanistan, our country must have top notch leadership at the agency responsible for rooting out the waste and fraud that can jeopardize our efforts. Mr. Fields simply was not the right person for this very difficult job. I hope that his departure will allow the agency to turn over a new leaf and finally begin to do the important contracting oversight work we so desperately need,” **Senator McCaskill** said.

"With a surge in troops, civilians, and resources to Afghanistan, the need for eliminating waste, fraud and corruption from our reconstruction aid has never been greater. I look forward to the President swiftly naming a new Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction," **Senator Coburn** said.

“I have repeatedly raised concerns about the performance of the SIGAR. It has been clear for many months that this important mission is not being served effectively. Today’s news is the first step to putting the oversight of our functions in Afghanistan on the correct path. It is now critical that the Administration appoint a leader who will provide aggressive and thorough oversight of the billions of dollars spent on reconstruction in Afghanistan,” **Senator Collins** said.

“Taxpayers deserve and need aggressive inspectors general who devote 110 percent to rooting out fraud, waste and abuse. I look forward to the President putting forth a nominee as soon as possible to protect tax dollars going to help the Afghan people,” **Senator Grassley** said.

In September 2010, the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) released three reviews of SIGAR, finding numerous problems with the agency’s work, including their failure to meet minimum standards for investigations. CIGIE, an independent government organization that reviews the work of inspectors general, also found that the agency had no meaningful strategic plan for their audits and investigations and that leadership at SIGAR remained more concerned with the quantity of their work rather than the quality.

Fields exhibited questionable judgment by entering into a no-bid \$95,000 contract with Joseph Schmitz as a consultant for the agency. Schmitz, a former Department of Defense Inspector General, resigned among serious allegations of misconduct, including obstructing criminal investigations, quashing audits, and misleading Congress. He was hired to independently monitor SIGAR’s performance in implementing the recommendations of CIGIE.

McCaskill also chaired a hearing on SIGAR’s performance in the Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight in November of 2010. Watch video from the hearing [here](#).

A copy of the letter sent by the four senators in September is available [here](#).