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MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

February 28, 2018

The Honorable Carol F. Ochoa
Inspector General
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Inspector General Ochoa:

I am writing to request that your office conduct an investigation into the abrupt decision by the General Services Administration (GSA) to abandon longstanding plans to move the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) into a new headquarters where it can consolidate its 11,000 personnel in the National Capital Region.

Over the past decade, GSA has spent a significant amount of time and resources developing plans to provide the FBI with a campus outside of the District of Columbia where it could consolidate its personnel in a modern and secure facility. On February 8, 2016, GSA submitted a prospectus highlighting the "urgent need" for this consolidation so the FBI could "greatly increase workforce and mission security." GSA stated: "Dispersion diverts time and resources, hampers coordination, decreases flexibility, and impedes FBI's ability to respond to ever changing, asymmetric threats."¹

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has also identified a number of serious operational and security challenges created by the location of the Hoover Building and the dispersal of FBI officials.²

Last week, GSA announced its decision to reverse course without adequately explaining why the previous plan was insufficient. GSA's new \$3.3 billion plan proposes transferring FBI officials to multiple temporary swing spaces, demolishing the existing Hoover Building, and building a new building in the current location. Unfortunately, because the new facility will not

¹ General Services Administration, *Prospectus—Construction FBI Headquarters Consolidation National Capital Region* (Feb. 8, 2016) (online at www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/FY2017_National_Capital_Region_FBI_Headquarters_Consolidation.pdf).

² Government Accountability Office, *Federal Real Property: Status of FBI Headquarters Consolidation and Issues Related to Funding Other Future Projects* (Aug. 2, 2017) (online at www.gao.gov/assets/690/686365.pdf).

be capable of housing all 11,000 headquarters employees, the plan would permanently disperse FBI officials across the country.³

GSA and the FBI justified their decision in a presentation delivered to the Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works on February 12, 2018. In the presentation, the agencies obscured the actual “total shortfall” for the original full consolidation project by assigning a value of \$0 to the Hoover Building. GSA previously valued Hoover at \$750 million. If any value of more than \$237 million were assigned to the Hoover Building, the “total shortfall” for the Hoover rebuild would actually be greater than the previous full consolidation concept. Either the GSA mispriced the Hoover Building by more than \$500 million, or GSA is hiding the fact that the shortfall for the rebuild is actually greater than the full consolidation plan.

On February 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Government Operations held a hearing on this issue, but GSA Administrator Emily Murphy could not adequately explain this decision-making process. She testified that all decisions “were at the direction of the FBI and their program requirements.”⁴

Similarly, Public Buildings Service Commissioner Dan Mathews testified that “building a building is less expensive than building a campus,” but he failed to address the annual savings of at least \$44 million the FBI previously claimed consolidation would reap for the government.⁵

Citing GSA’s own report, I asked Commissioner Mathews if GSA believed there were security concerns with keeping FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. His response was simply that the FBI “changed their program requirements” and GSA “can meet the security requirements of the FBI.”⁶

GSA’s top officials were unable to justify their sudden decision to abandon years of detailed planning, and they provided insufficient information about the factors on which they based their decision. For these reasons, we request that your office investigate this decision-making process to address at least the following questions:

³ *In Abrupt Shift, Federal Government Proposes Keeping FBI Downtown*, Washington Post (Feb. 12, 2018) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2018/02/12/in-abrupt-shift-federal-government-proposes-keeping-fbi-downtown/?utm_term=.9aab9969adea).

⁴ House Subcommittee on Government Operations, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Hearing on General Services Administration—Checking in with the Government’s Acquisition and Property Manager*, 115th Cong. (Feb. 15, 2018).

⁵ House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, *Hearing—The FBI Headquarters Consolidation*, 113th Cong. (March 13, 2013).

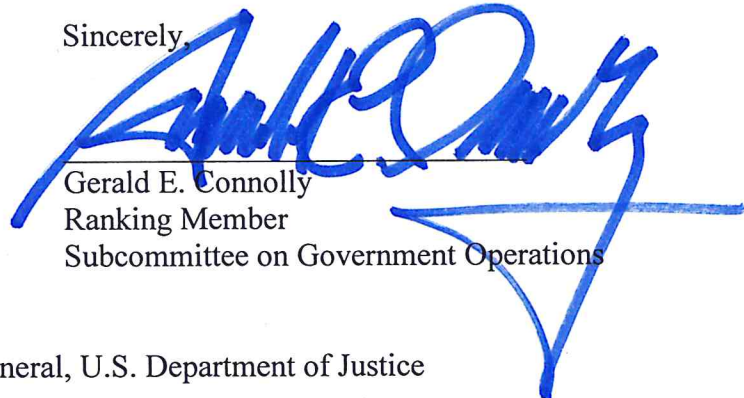
⁶ House Subcommittee on Government Operations, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Hearing on General Services Administration—Checking in with the Government’s Acquisition and Property Manager*, 115th Cong. (Feb. 15, 2018).

- (1) What information did GSA analyze when making its decision? Did it include detailed considerations of short-term and long-term costs, security, timeliness, and the benefits of co-location of staff?
- (2) Did GSA compare these and other factors adequately to other locations that had been under consideration?
- (3) To what extent were communications from outside sources considered, including but not limited to the FBI, the Department of Justice, GAO, the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, state or local officials, or private sector entities?
- (4) Does the current GSA proposal properly account for the full costs of the project, including rental payments and other expenses?

In addition to these questions, your office may have additional issues it believes are appropriate to address. For any questions relating to this request, please contact Sean Perryman at (202) 225-5051.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations

Cc: Michael E. Horowitz: Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice