

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 9, 2013

The Honorable Michele M. Leonhart
Administrator
Drug Enforcement Administration
800 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Administrator Leonhart:

As a key player in the joint U.S.-Colombian program known as "Plan Colombia," the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has been a vital partner to the Colombian government in working to reduce the power and impact of drug cartels in South America. The importance of that work makes the recent findings of the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (DOJ-OIG) regarding the misconduct of three DEA agents stationed in Cartagena, Colombia, all the more troubling. By letter dated December 20, 2012, which was hand delivered to my office on January 3, 2013, the DOJ-OIG provided a summary of its investigation into this matter. Although I am certain you are familiar with the Inspector General's findings, a copy of that letter is enclosed.

According to the summary, the DOJ-OIG found that three DEA agents stationed in Cartagena had hired prostitutes and had used their DEA Blackberry devices to arrange these liaisons. The DOJ-OIG also found that these three agents – all of whom had high-level security clearances – either attempted to destroy information tying them to that misconduct and/or initially lied to DOJ-OIG investigators about the incidents. The finding that these law enforcement officials obstructed the OIG's investigation is deeply troubling.

The letter indicates that, on September 17, 2012, the DOJ-OIG referred the matter to DEA to initiate appropriate administrative action against those involved. Despite the passage of more than three months, however, it is my understanding that those administrative actions are still pending.

Please provide me with a detailed update of the steps DEA is taking to hold its personnel accountable for the misconduct identified by the DOJ-OIG. In particular, please provide answers to the following questions:

- (1) Were the agents immediately relieved of their security clearances pending the investigation? If not, why not?
- (2) Are actions now underway to separate the agents from the DEA? If not, why not?

(3) Why haven't the administrative actions been completed given that the OIG's extremely serious findings about the engagement of prostitutes and obstruction of the investigation were relayed to DEA more than three months ago?

(4) What steps are you taking to determine whether the misconduct identified by the DOJ-OIG represents an isolated case or a symptom of a larger problem?

(5) What actions are you taking to ensure that similar incidents of misconduct do not occur in the future?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly or have your staff contact Julie Dunne of my staff at (202) 224-5364. I request answers to these questions no later than January 17, 2013.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator