U. S. Department of Justice

Office of the Inspector General

April 28, 2000

Honorable Janet Reno
Attorney General
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Madam Attorney General:

This semiannual report summarizes the accomplishments of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) during the six months ending March 31, 2000. During this reporting period, the OIG completed a severe reduction in our workforce that began in August 1998 with the imposition of a hiring freeze and culminated in recent months with additional departures by voluntary early retirement and the outplacement of employees to other Department components. As a result, the OIG has lost 21 percent of its workforce in the past 20 months These very painful adjustments were necessary to solidify and stabilize our financial situation in accordance with our available funding.

Amidst these financial concerns, OIG staff continues to produce high-quality audits, investigations, and inspections for the Department and Congress. It is particularly significant that we also increased the timeliness of OIG workproducts during these difficult times. We completed the comprehensive special investigation you requested into the Immigration and Naturalization Service's interactions with Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, the alleged "railway killer," on an accelerated basis; for the third year in a row, the Department's Financial Statement Audit was finished by the statutory deadline; similarly, the complex audit of the CALEA program was submitted to Congress on time; and a recent inspection of credit card expenditures was finished on an exceptionally expedited basis. Less visible, but of great importance, is the fact that our investigations, audits, and inspections – the everyday business of the OIG – are getting to Department managers faster than they used to.

I believe that a well-funded OIG is an investment in fighting corruption, misconduct, waste, fraud, and abuse – an investment that has proved cost effective within the Department for the last 10 years and across government for the past 20 years. We appreciate the support you have provided to ensure that this Department has a vigorous and independent OIG and look forward to working with you and your staff in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Ashbaugh
Acting Inspector General