



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 14, 2023

The Honorable
Roger Williams, Chairman
Committee on Small Business
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express the Department's deep concern regarding certain information that appears to have been publicly released by the Committee without prior consultation with the Department.

The Small Business Committee sent a letter on June 7 to Secretary Blinken regarding the Global Engagement Center (GEC). The Department responded by providing documents on December 3, 2023. Those documents were marked "SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED" and "PRODUCED TO COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS, NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE," as the Department had determined that public release of this information could jeopardize the GEC's programs and/or cause harm to the Department's implementing partners.

However, on January 9, the Washington Examiner published an article regarding the Committee's investigation, and linking to the documents produced by the Department—still clearly showing their "SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED" and "PRODUCED TO COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS, NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE," markings, which it reportedly obtained from the Committee.¹ The Committee made no effort to consult with the Department to protect or even ascertain any particular sensitivities before making the information public.

¹ <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/2789357/biden-administration-gop-incomplete-records-censorship-investigation/>

The Department continues to respond to the Committee's requests and remains committed to accommodating your need for information regarding the Global Engagement Center. However, without better understanding how the Committee will utilize this sensitive information, in the future the Department may be forced to only provide the Committee with sensitive information that is not suitable for public release in an *in camera* setting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoğlu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Naz Durakoğlu
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

cc: The Honorable Nydia Velazquez, Ranking Member
House Small Business Committee