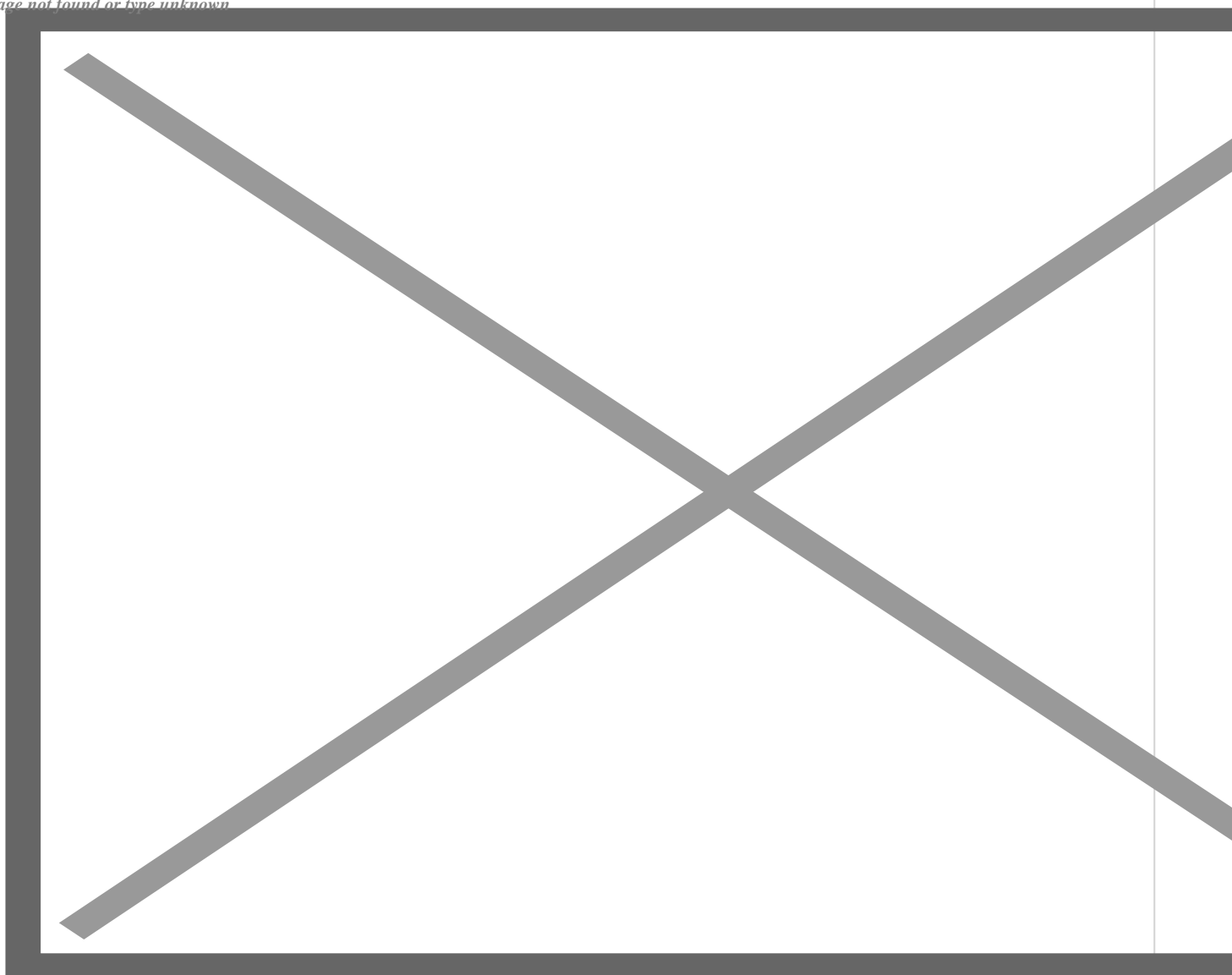


Mike Pompeo sinks in swamp of ethics abuses

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Among the incidents detailed in the report were a request from Pompeo's wife, Susan, right, for an aide to make two hair salon appointments for her [File: Saeed Khan/AFP]

Washington, April 18 (RHC)-- Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo violated federal ethics rules governing the use of taxpayer-funded resources when he, and his wife, asked State Department employees to carry out personal tasks more than 100 times, a government watchdog said in a report.

Pompeo, who was former President Donald Trump's last secretary of state, served until January 20th, when Trump finally and reluctantly left the White House after being defeated by Democrat Joe Biden in the November election.

Pompeo and his wife asked a political appointee and other employees in his office to carry out tasks such as "picking up personal items, planning events unrelated to the Department's mission, and conducting such personal business as pet care and mailing personal Christmas cards," the State Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) said in the report.

"The Pompeos made over 100 requests to employees in the office of the secretary to conduct work that appeared to be personal in nature," the report said.

Among the incidents detailed in the report were a request from Susan Pompeo for an aide to make two hair salon appointments for her. The report also said that the Pompeos' son received a discounted hotel room available only for government employees when he accompanied his parents to a football game that was listed as an official trip.

No action was recommended against Pompeo, who left office following Trump's election defeat and is widely seen as seeking to run for president in 2024.

Of course, Mike Pompeo slammed the report, saying it was politically motivated and filled with factual errors. "At no time did I, or my wife Susan, misuse taxpayer money or violate rules or ethical norms," Pompeo said in a statement.

During his tenure, Pompeo had a contentious relationship with the department's watchdog. A former inspector general, Steve Linick, was fired by Trump at Pompeo's recommendation. Linick was probing whether Pompeo misused a taxpayer-funded political appointee to perform personal tasks for himself and his wife.

OIG said it had completed most of its fieldwork on the report by August 2020. Its completion of the report was delayed because Pompeo refused to grant an interview to the OIG for several months until sitting down with them in December.

A State Department spokesman said the agency concurred with "all the recommendations [in the report] and will proceed to implement them."

Pompeo, a former lawyer and businessman who, unlike much of Trump's cabinet, was not personally wealthy, recently signed on as a commentator on Fox News and took a position at the Hudson Institute. He is said to have his eyes on a run for the U.S. presidency and is considered by many to be a far-right ideologue.



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