GAO's General Counsel responded to Mr. Addington by explaining in painstaking detail the legal basis for the investigation. The ten-page letter observed that "GAO has broad authority . . . to conduct the subject review and obtain [the] information requested." The letter pointed out that GAO has conducted numerous reviews of White House programs and activities in the past, such as President Clinton's Task Force on Health Care Reform and the White House China Trade Relations Group. The letter pointed to two statutes which "provide clear authority for the subject inquiry" and which give GAO tremendous discretion in performing its investigations. According to GAO, "[i]t would be difficult to conceive of language giving any official greater discretion than does the language in the statutory provisions at issue." **Documents and Links**

- Letter from GAO to Counsel to Vice President Cheney