



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

June 21, 2013

Lieutenant General Thomas B. Bostick
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dr. Rajiv Shah
Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development

Ms. Sarah W. Wines
USAID Acting Mission Director for Afghanistan

An urgent safety matter has come to my attention that I believe requires immediate action. Specifically, I want to alert you to serious safety risks at the Sheberghan teacher training facility in Jawzjan province, Afghanistan.

My office recently conducted an inspection of the Sheberghan teacher training facility, and is in the process of preparing a report on it.¹ While this report will be completed in the next few weeks, we believe the potential safety risks at this facility are of such a magnitude that we could not delay bringing them to your attention.

Our inspection of the Sheberghan facility found problems with the electrical, water, and sewage systems that could pose potentially serious health and safety hazards for its occupants. SIGAR inspectors found that the facility's electrical wiring does not meet the U.S. National Electrical Code—as required by the contract—and other problems that create potential electrocution risks and fire hazards for its occupants.

Although the facility currently does not receive power from the electrical generator provided under the contract, serious risk for its occupants are present due to improper entry into the electrical system—known as a “tap”—and by the improper connection to an alternative electrical power supply. In addition to the electrocution hazard, the facility currently lacks operational water and sewage systems, raising potential health issues for the building occupants.

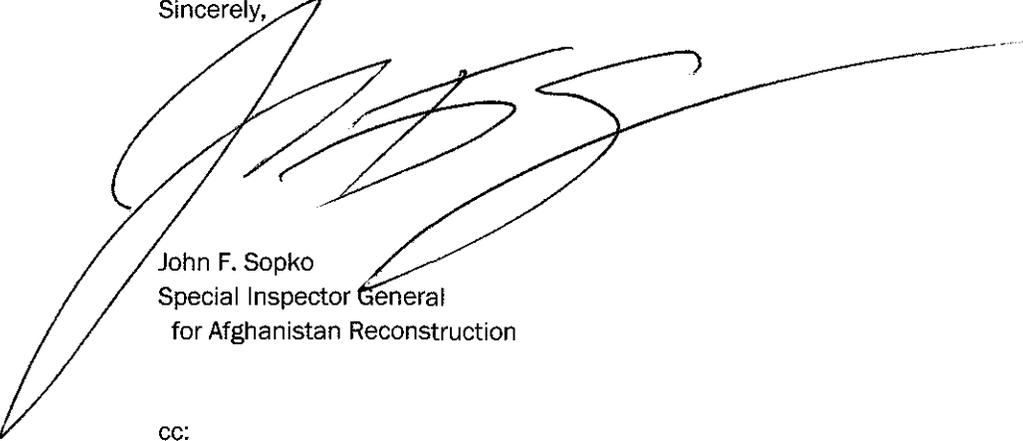
Despite the fact that the building is still under construction, our inspectors found that the Afghans have already begun using the building. As you know, the U.S. government is still responsible for the facility's operations and maintenance and any occupational health and safety issues because the U.S. Agency for International Development has not yet transferred the facility to the Afghan government. This underscores the immediacy of these hazards. Given the potential harm to the students, faculty, and others who are occupying the Sheberghan facility, we believe USAID should take all necessary and appropriate measures to address the safety risks discussed in this letter as soon as possible. Our inspection report will include recommendations to address these and other matters and will be provided to you as soon as it is completed. In the meantime, my

¹In February 2009, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, under an agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development, awarded a \$2.9 million contract—increased to a total contract value of \$3.4 million—to Mercury Development for the construction of three teacher training facilities, one of which was to be located in Sheberghan in Jawzjan province.

staff is available to brief you on our findings and proposed actions. We also will be asking the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to notify the Afghan Ministry of Education of these health and safety concerns.

Should you or your staff have any questions or need additional information, please contact Elizabeth Field, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Inspections, at 703-545-6006 or Elizabeth.a.field9.civ@mail.mil. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

cc:

The Honorable James B. Cunningham
U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

General Lloyd J. Austin III
Commander, U.S. Central Command

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, and
Commander, International Security Assistance Force

Lieutenant General Mark A. Milley
Commander, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command