

From the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction Transcript for:
Operation Oversight – Episode 10: 2019 High-Risk List

Description: Hear about the eight most serious risks to U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

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[Philip LaVelle] Welcome to Operation Oversight, the official podcast of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, also known as SIGAR. I'm Phil LaVelle of SIGAR's Office of Public Affairs. Today we're joined by Deborah Scroggins, SIGAR's Director of Research and Analysis.

Today we're going to talk about SIGAR's latest High-Risk List. Deb, welcome, and tell us what is the High-Risk List? How does this one differ from previous ones?

[Deborah Scroggins] Every two years, we put out a High-Risk List that identifies areas of concern for policymakers that we see as the biggest threats to Afghanistan reconstruction. This one is different from the previous two because it identifies threats both in the absence of a peace deal and the day after an agreement is reached.

[Philip LaVelle] Tell us about the issues that you highlight in this report.

[Deborah Scroggins] This time the report identifies eight high-risk areas. One is widespread insecurity. Then there's underdeveloped civil policing capability; endemic corruption; sluggish economic growth; the illicit narcotics trade; threats to women's rights; the reintegration of ex-combatants; and restricted oversight.

[Philip LaVelle] One of these issues, the status of women, is getting a lot of attention and is a real paramount question. Tell us about that.

[Deborah Scroggins] Yes, that's a new addition to our list and that's because up until now, Afghanistan has been making slow but steady progress in the area of women's rights, although as you mention, it's still one of the most difficult places in the world to be a woman. There are, today, women serving in the military. There are thousands of women teachers. There are judges. Millions of women have voted. All of that could be at risk in the event of a peace deal with the Taliban.

I think we all remember the days when the Taliban regime was in power and women were restricted to their homes and could not go to school. No one really knows what position the Taliban might take on women's rights if they were to enter politics.

[Philip LaVelle] Deb, what should American taxpayers take away from this report?

[Deborah Scroggins] The American taxpayer has spent about \$132 billion to reconstruct Afghanistan since 2001. What we're interested in, at SIGAR, is to preserve those gains. That's why we've come out with this report because these are threats to that investment that U.S. taxpayers have made in all these areas.

[Philip LaVelle] America has paid dearly. More than 2,400 American servicemembers have been killed in Afghanistan.

Thanks Deb, we appreciate your time today. If any of our listeners would like to learn more, I urge you to check out our website www.sigar.mil (S-I-G-A-R dot M-I-L), look us up on [Facebook](#), and check us out on Twitter [@SIGARHQ](#). Thanks for listening and we'll catch you on the next episode of Operation Oversight.

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