

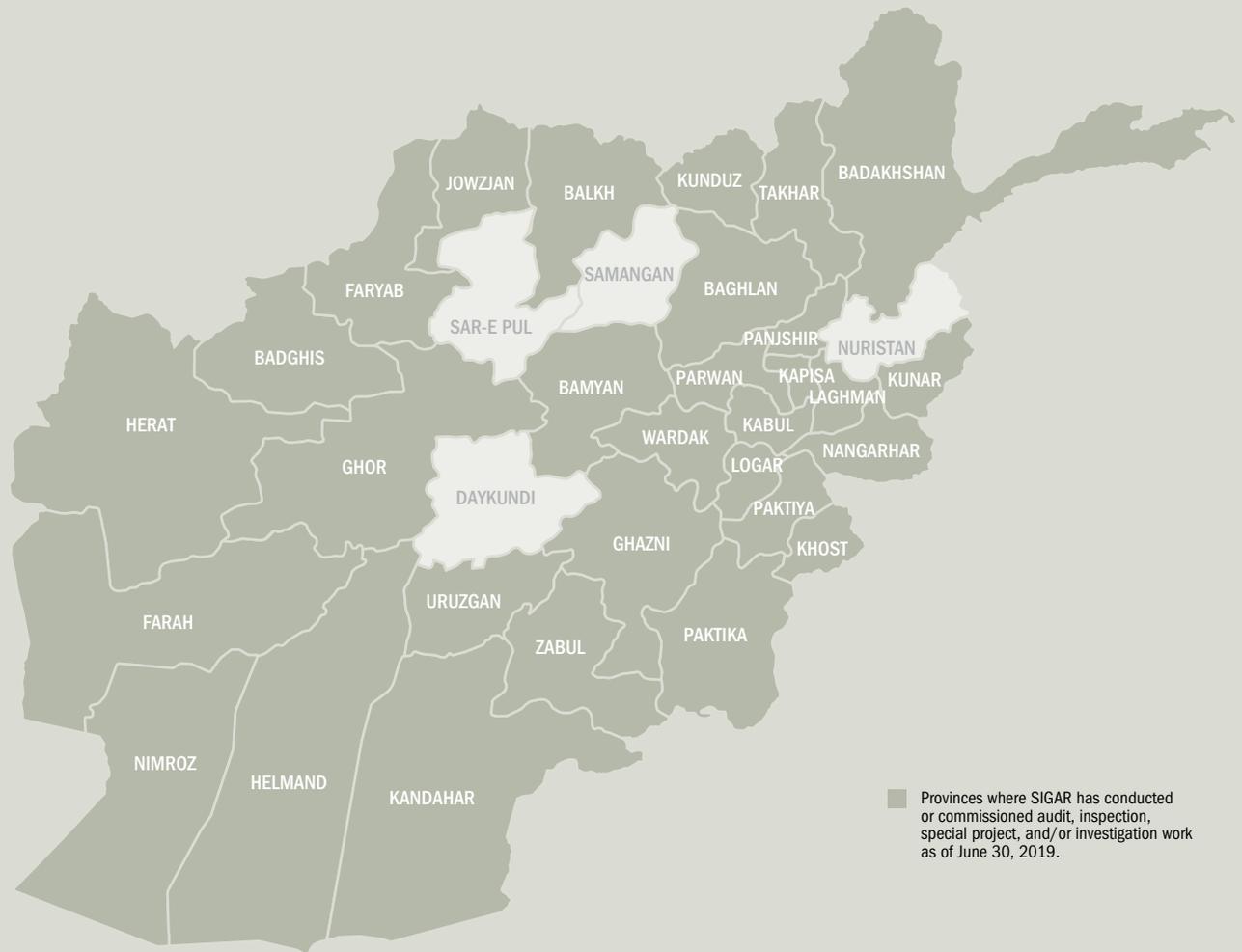
SIGAR

Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction

JUL 30
2019

— QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS —







SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR
AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

I am pleased to submit to Congress, and to the Secretaries of State and Defense, SIGAR's 44th quarterly report on the status of reconstruction in Afghanistan.

This quarter, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation (SRAR) Zalmay Khalilzad held what he characterized as “the most productive to date” U.S. talks with the Taliban. The SRAR's office told SIGAR these talks began June 29, 2019, and ended on July 9, after a two-day pause for an intra-Afghan dialogue, with both sides agreeing to set a date for another meeting after completing internal consultations.

The SRAR's office said negotiators made substantial progress on all four interrelated parts of the peace process: counterterrorism assurances, conditional troop-drawdown timelines, moving into intra-Afghan negotiations, and reaching a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire. However, the office said implementing U.S. commitments on the troop drawdown is contingent on Taliban participation in intra-Afghan negotiations and upholding their counterterrorism commitments. “Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed,” the SRAR said.

The talks came as SIGAR released its sixth Lessons Learned Program report, *Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan*. The report examined the patchwork of security-sector assistance programs undertaken by dozens of U.S. entities and international partners to develop the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Interior since 2001. It was the focus of an all-day event hosted by NATO on June 20, 2019, at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Approximately 100 attendees from various international organizations, European think tanks, and NATO directorates attended the event, which consisted of three panels, each focused on a particular aspect of the international community's efforts to develop host-nation security forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

SIGAR issued one performance audit report this quarter, reviewing the impact of the more than \$50 million spent by the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs on drug-treatment projects in Afghanistan, as well as one alert letter raising concerns with a significant oversight lapse in the Department of Defense's \$202 million ScanEagle unmanned aerial system program in Afghanistan. SIGAR also issued one inspection report examining the Afghan National Police Women's Compound at the Jalalabad Regional Training Center.

SIGAR completed six financial audits of U.S.-funded contracts to rebuild Afghanistan. These financial audits covered a range of topics including USAID's Strengthening Watershed and Irrigation Management Program, USAID's Strong Hubs for Afghan Hope and Resilience Program, and State's Afghanistan Interdiction and Support Services Program. These financial audits identified more than \$2.7 million in questioned costs as a result of internal-control deficiencies and noncompliance issues. To date, SIGAR's financial audits have identified more than \$428.4 million in questioned costs, interest, and other amounts payable to the U.S. government.

This quarter, SIGAR's Office of Special Projects issued two reports reviewing contractor vetting for work on the North East Power System and U.S. support for Afghanistan's civilian aviation sector.

During the reporting period, SIGAR investigations resulted in two guilty pleas, three sentencing, one criminal information, \$240,000 in criminal forfeitures and restitutions, \$602,000 in seizures, and approximately \$24.5 million in savings to the U.S. government. SIGAR initiated 11 new cases and closed 13, bringing the total number of ongoing investigations to 166.

SIGAR's suspension and debarment program also referred three individuals and one entity for suspension or debarment based on evidence developed as part of investigations conducted by SIGAR in Afghanistan and the United States. These referrals bring the total number of individuals and companies referred by SIGAR since 2008 to 973, encompassing 533 individuals and 440 companies.

As the peace talks continue to unfold, SIGAR will keep fighting to detect, prevent, and mitigate the waste, fraud, and abuse of U.S. funds in Afghanistan.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Sopko', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John F. Sopko

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes SIGAR’s oversight work and updates developments in the five major areas of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan from April 1 to June 30, 2019.* It includes an essay highlighting the findings in SIGAR’s recently released Lessons Learned Program report, *Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan*. This reporting period, SIGAR issued 12 audits, inspections, reviews, and other products assessing U.S. efforts to build the Afghan security forces, improve governance, facilitate economic and social development, and combat the production and sale of narcotics. During the reporting period, SIGAR criminal investigations resulted in two guilty pleas, three sentencing, one criminal information, \$240,000 in criminal forfeitures and restitutions, \$602,000 in seizures, and approximately \$24.5 million in savings to the United States government.

SIGAR OVERVIEW

AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

This quarter, SIGAR issued one performance audit, one alert letter, six financial audits, and one inspection report.

The **performance audit** report examined:

- the impact of the more than \$50 million spent by the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs on drug-treatment projects in Afghanistan and the sustainability of these projects

The **alert letter** raised concerns with a significant oversight lapse in the Department of Defense’s \$202 million ScanEagle Program in Afghanistan.

The six **financial audit reports** identified more than \$2.7 million in questioned costs as a result of internal-control deficiencies and noncompliance issues.

The **inspection report** found:

- two construction deficiencies with the Afghan National Police (ANP) Women’s Compound at the Jalalabad Regional Training Center and determined that the ANP has never occupied the compound

SPECIAL PROJECTS

This quarter, SIGAR’s Office of Special Projects issued two **reviews** concerning:

- contractor vetting for work on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ North East Power System
- the impact of U.S. support for Afghanistan’s civilian aviation sector

LESSONS LEARNED

SIGAR’s Lessons Learned Program released its sixth lessons-learned report, *Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan*.

The report examined the patchwork of security-sector assistance programs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

undertaken by dozens of U.S. entities and international partners to develop the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Interior since 2001. It uses the Afghan experience to identify lessons that can inform U.S. policies and actions through each phase of a security-sector assistance engagement in a foreign country.

Additionally, the Lessons Learned Program has three projects in development: U.S. government support to elections; monitoring and evaluation of reconstruction contracting; and reintegration of ex-combatants.

INVESTIGATIONS

During the reporting period, SIGAR investigations resulted in two guilty pleas, three sentencing, one criminal information, \$240,000 in criminal forfeitures and restitutions, \$602,000 in seizures, and approximately \$24.5 million in savings to the United States government. SIGAR initiated 11 new cases and closed 13, bringing the total number of ongoing investigations to 166. SIGAR's suspension and debarment program referred three individuals and one entity for suspension or debarment based on evidence developed as part of investigations conducted by SIGAR in Afghanistan and the United States.

Investigations highlights include:

- A SIGAR investigation led to a former CEO of two U.S. government contractors pleading guilty to a four-count criminal information for making false statements to increase his companies' competitiveness. James O'Brien altered letters of authorization to gain government-provided benefits in Afghanistan his companies were not authorized to have at no cost to the companies.
- SIGAR, FBI, DCIS, and Army CID investigations of Antonio Jones, a former U.S. government contractor, resulted in a guilty plea. As part of the plea, Jones admitted to making and using a fake Department of Transportation hazardous material (HAZMAT) training certificate to help an individual get a lucrative job handling HAZMAT in Afghanistan.
- Three former U.S. Army Special Forces members were sentenced for embezzling funds from the Commander's Emergency Response Program while deployed as a team in Afghanistan. Chief Warrant Officer Deric Harper, SFC Jeffrey Arthur Cook, and SFC Barry Lee Walls were each ordered to serve three years' probation, forfeit \$40,000, and pay \$40,000 in criminal restitution.

* As provided in its authorizing statute, SIGAR may also report on products and events occurring after June 30, 2019, up to the publication date of this report. Unless otherwise noted, all afghani-to-U.S. dollar conversions used in this report are derived by averaging the last six months of exchange-rate data available through Da Afghanistan Bank (www.dab.gov.af), then rounding to the nearest afghani. Data as of June 21, 2019.

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“Afghanistan remains NATO’s highest operational priority, and together with our operational partners, we remain committed to our goal of ensuring Afghanistan never again becomes a platform to export terrorism.”

—*NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg*

1 MANAGING SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES



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U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters arrive at a mission support site in Nangarhar Province.
(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Sharida Jackson)

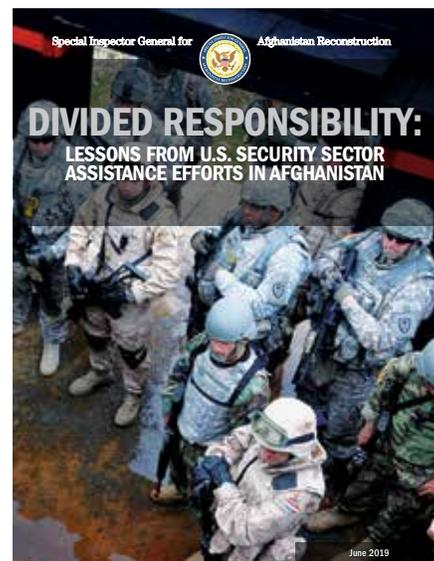
MANAGING SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

Recent media coverage of Afghanistan has focused on the possibility of ending the continuing violence there through U.S. and intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban. But as noted by many experts and government officials, international security-assistance efforts seem bound to continue even if a peace agreement is reached, and a new SIGAR lessons-learned report offers analysis and recommendations for better managing them.

“We are not cutting and running” from Afghanistan, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad told a Washington, DC, audience on July 11. “We’re not looking for a withdrawal agreement . . . we’re looking for a long-term relationship and partnership with Afghanistan.”¹ Since the United States intervened in Afghanistan in 2001 to topple the Taliban regime for harboring al-Qaeda terrorists, a critical component of that partnership has been providing security assistance to the Afghan government. Top military leaders also say continuing engagement is vital. Outgoing and incoming commanders of U.S. Central Command have told Congress that without international support, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) cannot sustain themselves.² This month, General Mark Milley, testified at his confirmation hearing to become the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that “pulling out prematurely would be a strategic mistake.”³

For more than 17 years, the United States, other members of the NATO alliance, and several partner nations have provided support for developing an Afghan military and police capability that can deliver security for the Afghan people and serve as an ally in the global war on terrorism. Dozens of U.S. and international organizations and military services have given financial support and deployed civilian and military advisors.

Divisions of responsibilities have—understandably—occurred among countries in the NATO-led train, advise, assist mission⁴; among service branches and departments within countries; and among components of those entities. Responsibilities have been variously divided for functions, for tasks, for geographic areas, for oversight mission, and for results.



Cover of the 2019 *Divided Responsibility* report. (U.S. Army photo by Tyrone Walker)

“Pulling out [of Afghanistan] prematurely would be a strategic mistake.”

—General Mark Milley, U.S. Army, nominee for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

SIGAR's recently released lessons-learned report, *Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance in Afghanistan*, found that these divisions often created strains on both unity of command and unity of effort.⁵ For example, while the dual-hatted U.S./NATO commander in Afghanistan is largely responsible for reconstructing the ANDSF, that commander has no direct authority over civilian actors operating within embassies, the European Union, and other international organizations that are also part of the effort.

Additionally, the commander lacks absolute authority to dictate the exact methods and activities each NATO country must use when training, advising, or assisting the ANDSF and the Afghan ministries of defense and interior. These issues impeded the standardization of security assistance programs and failed to optimize the international community's significant contribution.

Even within the U.S. effort, no executive branch or military service was assigned ownership of developing key components of the mission. For instance, the U.S. Army was never assigned responsibility to develop the Afghan National Army's combat capabilities. Rather, the U.S. military services and executive branch agencies were instructed to deploy personnel to assume responsibility of security-assistance activities for the duration of individual deployments that normally lasted a year or less. The deployed personnel often lacked the required expertise and were provided inadequate pre-deployment training to prepare for their advisor mission. Most advisors returned from their deployment in Afghanistan to assume careers in fields unrelated to security assistance or Afghanistan. The result of this approach was that the United States and international community failed to implement a comprehensive, expert-design, and enduring multi-year enduring plan to guide all security-sector assistance (SSA) activities.

Afghanistan thus provides a valuable case study to examine how the United States engages in SSA missions as part of a larger international coalition and also in conjunction with major combat operations.

A DEBUT IN A NATO CONTEXT

The 188-page *Divided Responsibility* report made its debut during a day-long private event hosted by NATO at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, on June 20, 2019. About 100 attendees from international organizations, European think tanks, and NATO directorates attended.⁶

After NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller opened the conference, SIGAR's Inspector General John F. Sopko gave the keynote address. Conference attendees then participated in three panel discussions on aspects of the international effort to improve foreign-country defense and security forces. Panel participants included SIGAR Deputy Inspector General Gene Aloise and LLP Project Lead James Cunningham.

NATO's Mission in Afghanistan

NATO operates the noncombat Resolute Support (RS) train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan, which numbered about 17,000 troops as of June 2019. The United States provides about half of the RS strength, nearly 8,500 troops. Other leading contributors include Germany (1,300); the United Kingdom (1,100); Italy (895); the country of Georgia (870); and Romania (763); Luxembourg had the smallest contingent, with two personnel.⁷ Several thousand additional U.S. military personnel serve in Afghanistan under U.S. command to conduct counterterrorism missions, combat support, and other tasks. Since September 2018, U.S. Army General Austin S. Miller has commanded both the NATO RS mission and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.⁸

“NATO has played a vital role in supporting U.S. efforts in Afghanistan over the past 17 years,” Sopko said, “from invoking [the mutual-defense language of] Article 5 of the NATO Charter for the only time in its history, to continuing to deploy forces to train, advise, and assist the Afghan security forces.” He stressed that SIGAR’s new report is not a criticism of NATO efforts, but SIGAR’s “whole of government” purview for U.S. efforts made it imperative to take a “whole of governments” look at how U.S. efforts intersected with partner countries’ roles.

“This report may be useful to you,” Sopko told the NATO audience, “because it is the first independent effort to evaluate the entire security-sector assistance mission in depth. At a minimum, the Afghanistan experience provides a unique case study to examine lessons learned from conducting security-sector assistance while simultaneously engaging in large combat operations, as well as lessons on how to conduct security-sector assistance as a coalition.”⁹

Cunningham, the lead analyst on SIGAR’s new LLP report, described shortcomings associated with the U.S. and NATO approach to security-sector assistance in Afghanistan, such as not assigning organizations responsibility for key functions, implementing a command-and-control structure that did not consistently link ministerial and tactical advising efforts, and not having a comprehensive, enduring plan to guide all efforts.¹⁰ During the question period, he added that while the U.S. Department of Defense and NATO have taken some positive steps, continuing to deploy advisors without awareness of or access to doctrine and policy updates, or to best practices and lessons learned, will cause continuing problems for the assistance mission.

The stakes, whether financial or programmatic, are high. Since Fiscal Year 2002, the U.S. Congress has appropriated more than \$80 billion for security-sector assistance in Afghanistan. That is about 62% of the more than \$130 billion for all U.S. reconstruction funding there.¹¹ Yet no one person, agency, country, or military service has had sole responsibility for overseeing security-sector assistance.¹² Instead, responsibility was divided among and within multiple U.S. and international entities.

SIGAR'S LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM

SIGAR created its Lessons Learned Program (LLP) in 2014 at the urging of former International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan commander General John Allen, former U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and other senior government officials who noted that SIGAR was the only U.S. government agency with the statutory mandate to take a “whole of government” look at approaches to reconstruction in Afghanistan. Six LLP reports based on SIGAR’s own oversight work and input from many other sources have followed. Setting out narrative context, identifying lessons, and offering recommendations, the reports have examined U.S. anticorruption efforts in Afghanistan, reconstruction of Afghan security forces, private-sector development initiatives, stabilization activities, counternarcotics, and now, security-sector assistance. SIGAR is scheduled to launch the *Divided Responsibility* report on July 29, 2019 at the Center for Security and International Studies. Additional reports are in development. The director of LLP is Joseph Windrem. All published LLP reports are posted on the SIGAR website, <https://www.sigar.mil>.

SIGAR’s new report examines how divisions of responsibility have had unintended consequences and created challenges to the effectiveness of the mission—but have also produced some benefits.

PLUSES AND MINUSES

As Inspector General Sopko explained to the NATO audience in Brussels, the multilateral approach to security assistance had some real benefits, including:¹³

- providing mechanisms for better coordination among the international military alliance, which traditional bilateral missions might not have produced
- demonstrating NATO’s dedication, political will, and cohesion over nearly two decades
- leveraging specific member-country capabilities like Eastern European allies’ familiarity with the Russian language and Russian equipment, both still in use in Afghanistan, and Italian, Turkish, and Romanian experience in national and paramilitary policing—an area not part of the U.S. security apparatus
- burden sharing that has permitted the United States to task more of its forces to address global security issues beyond Afghanistan

However, responsibilities were divided, and the U.S. general commanding both the NATO RS mission and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan has no direct authority over civilian actors operating within embassies, the European Union, and other international organizations. Nor can that general exercise full control of the methods and activities NATO countries use to train and advise the Afghan security. “We found,” Sopko said, “that this has led to uneven Afghan security-force development and impeded the standardization of security-sector assistance programs in Afghanistan.”¹⁴

Other challenges, Sopko told the Brussels audience, included “chronic shortfalls” in NATO deployments to Afghanistan versus stated commitments, the many national caveats on use of forces, and a “civilian-military divide within NATO mission contributors, particularly when it came to training the Afghan National Police.”¹⁵ For example, as the report notes, “In western Afghanistan, the Italian *Carabinieri* [national gendarmerie] train the ANP [Afghan National Police] to do community policing, while U.S. military personnel train the ANP elsewhere to conduct counterinsurgency operations. ... Implementing various and at times contradictory advisory models hinders unity of effort.”¹⁶



A U.S. Marine Corps advisor discusses tactics with an Afghan battalion commander and company commander. (OSD Public Affairs photo)

THE CASE OF U.S. FIELD ADVISING IN AFGHANISTAN

The big-picture multilateral train, advise, assist mission under the aegis of NATO dominates day-to-day operations in Afghanistan now, but the *Divided Responsibility* report devotes considerable attention to challenges facing the U.S. role in the advising effort there.

The U.S. Army, for example, has employed four different approaches to forming and employing advisor teams in Afghanistan. But challenges persist. Recruiting soldiers in military specialties like logistics, intelligence, and medical services at appropriate ranks is a challenge because such specialists are in high demand elsewhere, while senior officers and non-commissioned officers may not perceive advising as career-enhancing duty. While predeployment training now focuses more on advisor-specific skills, there is not enough theater-specific training focused on the host nation's security institutions, systems, processes, and weapons.¹⁷

The report also discusses the U.S. Marine Corps experience in providing advisory assistance in Afghanistan. The Marines established their own process for predeployment training, first at Twentynine Palms, California, and later in more mountainous venues at Bridgeport, California, and Hawthorne, Nevada. Like their U.S. Army counterparts, many Marines found their training problematic, including: training in the wrong language for their deployment area, lack of information about weapons and equipment used by the Afghans, and using Afghan interpreters and role-players with no recent knowledge of living or working in their native country.¹⁸

The LLP report relates some key findings that have emerged from its review of these and other issues in the U.S. field-advising mission in Afghanistan.¹⁹

No single U.S. military service owned or was responsible for developing ANDSF combat capabilities. Instead, DOD looked to the various services

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE LLP REPORT

In addition to its own research and expertise, SIGAR's Lessons Learned Program project team also drew on agency resources in SIGAR's Audits, Investigations, and Research and Analysis directorates, and the Office of Special Projects to prepare the *Divided Responsibility* report. The report also benefits from information and comments from many federal civilian and military officials at the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Department of State; and from international partners at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Before its publication, the report underwent a peer review by 13 American and European subject-matter experts. While the report is a truly collaborative effort, SIGAR assumes sole responsibility for the final product.

MANAGING SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES



An ANA officer listens to a U.S. Army officer at a temporary tactical operations center in Bati Kot, Nangarhar Province, during an ANA-led clearing operation. (U.S. Army photo)

to fill staffing requirements for training and advising teams. The design for training teams and predeployment training for advisors varied across the military services. Although DOD has developed new advisor team models intended to mitigate command-and-control issues between combat-focused military elements and advisory teams, the U.S. military has struggled to set priorities for the mission, resource allocation, and enabler support.

Despite efforts to improve advisor selection and predeployment training, advisor units continue to face some long-standing challenges, such as delayed team formations, assignment to non-advisor tasks, and assignment changes in mid-deployment. Advisor roles continue to be seen as not career enhancing, which contributes to high attrition rates and limited continuity.

As noted in the Army and Marine items above, the U.S. military has struggled to staff field advisor teams from the current supply of field-grade officers, senior noncommissioned officers, and certain specialist enlisted personnel, and to provide the personnel it does deploy with adequate advance training.

Other chapters in the report focus on issues including equipping Afghan forces, ministerial-level advising, U.S.-based training for Afghan personnel, and the NATO role in security-sector assistance to Afghanistan. Each chapter presents findings and recommendations keyed to its specific topic. For example, chapter 2, “Field Advising,” offers seven recommendations, including: creating career paths, incentives, and post-deployment career opportunities for combat advisors; conducting a global assessment of human-resource needs for advisors; certifying the staffing, training, and equipping status of security-force advisory brigade personnel; and creating a Joint Security Force Assistance Command to monitor advisor

requirements among the different military services and provide some standardization in unit organization and predeployment training.²⁰

OVERALL LESSONS

In addition to offering specific findings and recommendations for each of its chapter topics, *Divided Responsibility* extracts 10 overall lessons from its examination of the long U.S.-NATO involvement in security-sector assistance to Afghanistan. They are, with some of the commentary following each lead sentence abridged or omitted:²¹

1. “The lack of a comprehensive and consistent long-term plan to train, advise, assist, and equip a partner nation’s military and security forces results in misalignment of advisors and ad hoc decision-making. ... Without a long-term plan that detailed desired operational capabilities, equipping decisions were often ad hoc and inconsistent from year to year.”
2. “Conducting SSA [security-sector assistance] activities while the United States is engaged in major combat operations fractures the traditional way the United States develops partner forces and creates a disjointed command-and-control relationship between the U.S. military and civilian leadership. A long-term vision is required in order to transfer responsibility from the senior military commander back to the embassy and ambassador. ... Traditional SSA activities are a longer-term commitment than the deployment of U.S. military combat forces.”
3. “SSA missions that involve NATO require a plan to improve coordination among all international stakeholders involved in the development of the host nation’s defense and security forces. ... The United States and coalition partners suffer from a lack of civilian-military coordination: Its military component serves as a member of the NATO-led coalition, while its embassy communicates directly with the Afghan government. Embassy coordination of SSA efforts among allies is based on informal working groups, coordination committees, or personal relationships, which have had various levels of success.”
4. “Unless there is a plan to transition responsibilities to a partner nation, the [U.S.] foreign military sales process used in Afghanistan will likely limit the institutional development of a partner nation as well as that nation’s ownership of and responsibility for its own resources.”
5. “U.S. financing of partner nation security forces may be a continued requirement even as their capabilities improve. The U.S. government continues to provide close to \$5 billion a year in security sector assistance to Afghanistan. Even as the ANDSF

becomes less reliant on day-to-day U.S. military support, projected financial support to sustain the ANDSF remains steady.”

6. “Creating professional military advisors requires long-term assignments, proper incentives, and the ability to refine advisor skills through multiple deployments and training cycles. DOD efforts to institutionalize security sector assistance programs suffered from high levels of personnel turnover, short-term rotations, and a failure to develop a cadre of advisors with regional and functional expertise.”
7. “Advisors are best prepared when they are selected based on technical expertise, are trained and vetted for their ability to advise, and when they receive predeployment training focused on the partner nation’s military structures, processes, culture, and equipment. [However] Military and civilian advisors frequently emphasized that they were not selected based on professional background, did not receive adequate training and exposure to Afghan military systems and equipment, and did not receive adequate training on how to be an effective advisor.”
8. “Filling advisor requirements strains the U.S. military and civilian agencies, as advisors are typically in high demand, yet there are very few trained and readily available.”
9. “Equipping partner forces requires determining the capabilities the United States will train and advise on for the long term, versus those capabilities the United States will assist with in the short term to help the host nation reduce or remove a particular threat. Failure to determine this will result in equipping a partner nation with capabilities it may not need or be able to sustain.”
10. “Failure to establish lead organizations with unified command over SSA from the ministerial to tactical levels results in an inability to identify needs, fragmented command and control, and limited accountability and oversight.”

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

SIGAR recognizes that there is no “silver bullet” that will solve all coordination and command-and-control challenges associated with large-scale Coalition security-sector assistance missions, but it does have recommendations to improve mission execution. Described at greater length in the report, these recommendations include:

- assign responsibility of key aspects of the mission
- improve personnel selection and predeployment training
- improve coordination within the United States and with international allies

- improve long-term planning for SSA efforts in Afghanistan in order to better align U.S. government activities with the international coalition
- increase Afghan involvement in and ownership of key decisions
- increase the advisors' awareness of complementary SSA activities
- centralize command and control for U.S. and NATO SSA missions

Additionally, SIGAR recommends that the United States begin the planning process to determine the U.S. military-advisor presence required to provide the necessary future support to the ANDSF. As part of the planning process, the U.S. must consider the challenges and best practices of engaging in security-sector assistance as a member of the NATO coalition versus reverting to a more traditional bilateral model, operating under the guidance of the U.S. ambassador and as part of the U.S.'s overarching foreign policy emanating from the U.S. Embassy.

CONCLUSION

Improving the management of divided responsibilities is an important task for the United States and its NATO allies to promote better results in Afghanistan and in other contingencies that may arise.

The United States has thus far expressed its intention to continue reconstruction and military support for Afghanistan into the next decade. Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has indicated that NATO operations will continue as part of the process of seeking a peace agreement in Afghanistan.

“We need a negotiated solution,” he told interviewers before attending a June meeting of NATO defense ministers. “For NATO, the best way to support those peace efforts is to provide training, assistance, advice, and support to the Afghan Army, [and to Afghan] security forces, because the Taliban has to understand that they will never win on the battlefield.”²²

The lessons and recommendations of SIGAR's *Divided Responsibility* report could, if taken to heart and put into practice, improve these important security-assistance efforts.

“The Afghan government cannot survive financially or militarily without continued external assistance, and with those donor funds comes the dual risk of losing money to corruption, as well as contributing to fostering corruption by distorting the economy.”

—*SIGAR, Inspector General John Sopko*