



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

April 17, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense

Dear Secretary Carter:

I am writing to inquire about the transfer of hundreds of former U.S. military bases in Afghanistan to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Since late 2010, the United States has transferred 813 bases to the ANSF. Given the substantial expense associated with their construction and their potential either to go unused by the ANSF or to be compromised by insurgent forces, I am seeking information regarding the processes the Department of Defense (DOD) follows when transferring these bases. The information requested by this letter will assist my office in its ongoing review of the extent to which these base transfers are supporting the U.S. government's ongoing efforts to develop the ANSF.

This inquiry was prompted by what my office has learned about the transfer of Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province. In conjunction with the closure of Camp Leatherneck in October 2014, the United States transferred real property (e.g., land and buildings) and personal property (e.g., equipment and vehicles) with an estimated value of \$266.5 million¹ to the Afghan National Army (ANA).

However, according to DOD officials who briefed SIGAR at Camp Leatherneck, at the time of transfer the ANA did not have a plan in place to ensure the efficient and effective use of this large, well-equipped military base that includes over 2,000 buildings.² Although the ANA apparently indicated to DOD officials that it had yet to determine how the base would be used, it is my understanding that ANA personnel began removing equipment and non-military vehicles from Camp Leatherneck the day after it was transferred. These actions may have, among other things, undercut the ability of the Afghan government to operate the airfield at Camp Leatherneck.

I am concerned that the limited planning associated with the transfer of Camp Leatherneck may be indicative of broader difficulties associated with the transfer of former U.S. military bases to the ANSF. Please provide the following information, which will assist with my office's efforts to determine whether valuable assets that could otherwise be used to further develop the ANSF are being wasted:

1. A description of efforts by DOD to ensure that the ANSF can properly sustain, protect, and utilize former U.S. military bases transferred to the ANSF.

¹ This total figure is based on official transfer of authority documents provided by the Department of Defense to SIGAR.

² Included in these buildings is the 64,000 sq. ft. command and control facility built at a cost of \$36 million that was never occupied by U.S. forces. The transfer of authority documents set the current depreciated value of this particular building at \$12.7 million.

2. The processes DOD follows when making final determinations about which buildings and equipment are to be deconstructed or removed when a base is transferred to the ANSF. This information should include, but not be limited to, the methodology used to assess the value of the real and personal property transferred.
3. The base names, date the base was established, date the base was transferred, and geospatial location points; and the total estimated value of transferred real and personal property associated with the bases transferred to the ANSF.
4. A description of any post-transfer monitoring efforts by DOD that are intended to ensure the ANSF is adequately maintaining the transferred facilities and equipment.

I am submitting this request pursuant to my authority under Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Please direct your staff to provide the information requested no later than May 23, 2015, to my Director of Special Projects, Mr. Jack Mitchell, at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Sopko', written in a cursive style.

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction