



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

August 5, 2013

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)

Dear Mr. Sopko,

Thank you for your feedback on our March 25 response to your query regarding our top 10 most and least successful projects and programs in Afghanistan. We found this to be a useful exercise that sparked productive conversations and enhanced coordination both within the Department of State and with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with whom we answered jointly.

Our agencies chose to respond jointly to highlight our close interagency cooperation in achieving measurable results from our assistance efforts in Afghanistan in support of our national security goal of ensuring Afghanistan can no longer be a safe haven for terrorists that threaten U.S. interests. We were pleased to report on some of the accomplishments of the Department of State and USAID in Afghanistan in recent years, as well as on some of the problems that we have faced in implementing foreign assistance.

We highlighted assistance programs in the education sector, in the field of public health, in public financial management, and with respect to promoting the empowered role of women, access to electricity and good governance and the rule of law. These programs have contributed to measurable positive impacts on Afghanistan's development and stability, with achievements- based objective indicators of progress including improvement on international indices for human, economic, and democratic development. We also acknowledged that operating in a war-time environment means it is inevitable that not every program has succeeded as originally intended. Delays, fraud, poor performance, security challenges, and contractor overcharges have been an unfortunate feature of trying to achieve our national priorities in Afghanistan that we have constantly battled against. Many of the obstacles we have encountered have been well documented and have benefited from SIGAR's oversight.

In noting in the March response those areas where continuing attention is warranted given the challenges of operating in Afghanistan, we emphasized that we share SIGAR's goal of safeguarding U.S. taxpayer resources from fraud, waste, and abuse, while seeking the most effective uses of those resources in advancing our national security through assistance programs in Afghanistan. We look forward to working together to find ways to improve our oversight mechanisms.

As we explained in our March letter, however, we monitor and evaluate individual projects against the detailed standards and outcomes established in the initial performance documents. Given the wide range of assistance projects and programs our agencies have carried out, we do not compare individual projects against others, particularly over a decade of intensive rebuilding efforts, which result in constantly changing conditions for each project. We also recognize that achieving our strategic goals in any particular sector in Afghanistan requires a number of projects working together in time or over time -- including those using other donors' funds.

While we recognize the value of many of the points emphasized in your follow up letter, upon reviewing the modified request we believe we have no additional information to supplement our response to your original request. We welcome further discussion and oversight of any of our existing or past reconstruction projects and programs in Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jarrett Blanc', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jarrett Blanc
Deputy Special Representative for
Afghanistan and Pakistan



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

July 5, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
U.S. Secretary of State

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
U.S. Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Rajiv Shah
Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development

Dear Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, and Administrator Shah:

On March 25, 2013, I wrote to you asking that your agencies provide SIGAR with information on what each of you considers to be the 10 most successful and 10 least successful projects or programs within your agency in the U.S. effort for reconstruction of Afghanistan, supplemented with explanations of selection and evaluation criteria for your choices. A copy of that letter is attached.

Comparing outcomes is, in addition to being good practice for managers and part of the job for inspectors general, the subject of formal guidance for Executive Branch departments and agencies. In May 2012, the Office of Management and Budget issued a memorandum on "Use of Evidence and Evaluation in the 2014 Budget." That document said, in part:

Agencies are encouraged to include measurement of costs and costs per outcome as part of the routine reporting of funded programs to allow for useful *comparison* of cost-effectiveness across programs. ... Once evidence-based programs have been identified, such a [return-on-investment] analysis can improve agency resource allocation and inform public understanding. ... OMB invites agencies to identify areas where research provides strong evidence regarding the *comparative* cost-effectiveness of agency investments.ⁱ [Emphasis added.]

I recognize that applying cost-effectiveness and comparative analysis to programs and projects in a contingency-operation zone like Afghanistan, where benefits may include "soft" outcomes like public opinion, and where multiple programs support similar goals, can be difficult. But the importance of the mission and the billions of dollars supporting it demand that comparisons be made as best we can. That consideration—and the well-documented flaws and disappointments in many U.S.-funded initiatives—was the motive for my March 25 letter to you.

I have the responses to that letter submitted by your designees. Mr. Daniel Feldman, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Mr. J. Alexander Thier, Assistant to the Administrator for Afghanistan and Pakistan, supplied a joint State/USAID response dated May 9, 2013. Mr. Mike Dumont, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs, submitted a response dated June 18, 2013.

Both response letters are thoughtful and informative, and include pertinent observations of the difficulty of executing reconstruction programs in a setting like Afghanistan, plagued as it is by violence, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and other problems. In three trips to Afghanistan during my first year as Special Inspector General, I have seen and heard much evidence of the difficulties facing program and project planners, managers, and oversight officials, both civilian and military. I have special respect for the dedication and bravery of your staff working in that dangerous part of the world, and agree that they have contributed significantly to producing some indicators of genuine progress in security, governance, development, rule of law, human rights, and other areas that will benefit the people of Afghanistan and America's policy interests.

Nonetheless, I have some difficulties with the responsiveness of your agencies' letters.

First, State and USAID made a *joint* response, despite separate requests having been made to them. I understand—and am delighted as a citizen and taxpayer—that the agencies are in “close cooperation” on matters affecting Afghan reconstruction. However, each agency has its own internal organization and practices, its own in-house Inspector General evaluating that agency's projects and programs, and its own list of programs on its own website. Because State and USAID are legally distinct entities, and because they have operational autonomy within the ambit of their missions (however closely they cooperate), I ask that the two agencies provide separate responses to this letter. I speculate that State pursued the path of a joint response because of the limited number of its programs in Afghanistan; that point will be addressed later in this letter via slightly modified request language.

Second, neither response letter complied with my request for a listing and discussion of each agency's 10 most and 10 least successful projects or programs. The State/USAID response explicitly said, “we do not compare individual projects against others.” Yet the same letter later notes that “not every program has succeeded as originally intended,” which I read as evidence that someone has examined the results of individual programs and observed that some succeeded and others did not. Defense stated that many reconstruction programs are conducted in cooperation with partners and are “evaluated on a project-specific basis” rather than compared. That may well be, but I note that my March 25 letter asked about “projects/programs,” not exclusively one or the other.

Program evaluation inevitably entails or at least facilitates comparisons of projects. If not, what basis would agency managers have for deciding—say, in the face of budget cuts, sequestrations, or new mission directives—which projects to prioritize, expand, contract, terminate, transfer, or redesign? How do they decide which project managers deserve greater responsibility or career advancement, or the obverse, without comparing outcomes? How do they capture lessons learned to improve agency performance without making comparisons? Nonetheless, even if a formal process of comparing program or project outcomes does not exist within your agencies, I hope it will not seem unreasonable if I ask you to make at minimum a limited, judgmental comparison to help SIGAR with its official duties.

My third concern with the agency response letters involves the concept of indicators. The letters contain many interesting and encouraging data points illustrating or suggesting overall progress in Afghanistan reconstruction. Unfortunately, many of them show no obvious causal nexus with a particular U.S. program or project, or present an output as a *prima facie* indicator of success. USAID projects and programs are assigned performance indicators that are the basis for

observing progress and measuring actual results compared to expected results of the program.ⁱⁱ Yet the joint State/USAID letter does not identify discrete, program-specific indicators necessary to identify characteristics and outcomes, or to inform decisions about current and future programming. Similarly, the Department of Defense mandated that projects executed through the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) have performance metrics for all projects over \$50,000 to be tracked up to 365 days after a project has been completed.ⁱⁱⁱ CERP performance metrics include the issue of sustainability.^{iv} These are worthy requirements, but not all metrics are equally salient or useful.

For an example of a possibly ambiguous indicator, the State/USAID letter notes that the proportion of the Afghan population within an hour's walk of a health-care facility has risen from 9 percent in 2001 to more than 60 percent today. However, Afghanistan has been slowly urbanizing for decades, with estimates of 4.7 percent annual growth in urban populations in the 2010–2015 period.^v So some part of the observed increase in the one-hour's-walk parameter simply reflects a demographic trend. As urbanization continues, the indicator would improve even if health-facility construction stopped completely. For that matter, the indicator could also improve if more direct or better-surfaced roads and paths were built. Identifying reasonable and measurable indicators for specific efforts is admittedly not an exact science, but the causal haziness around the edges of this indicator suggests that careful attention to selection, logic, and measurement protocol is warranted.

In addition, the health indicators cited in the letter are for the country as a whole and are not specific to the 13 of 34 provinces supported by USAID. The USAID Inspector General found in one 2011 audit that

measurement of the magnitude of USAID's contribution to the national objectives could be made only indirectly using proxy indicators because no current demographic information or health statistics were available to measure health outcomes directly.^{vi}

The Afghanistan Mortality Survey of 2010 cited in the joint State/USAID letter does not address this issue as there is still no clear connection between United States government efforts and overall health improvements that have undoubtedly occurred since 2001. For example, the survey reports that the sample design had disproportionate exclusion, particularly of rural areas, in the southern region that would affect five of the thirteen provinces specifically supported by USAID.^{vii} Some of these data points also appear to have been selectively chosen in order to emphasize progress, as with the life-expectancy improvement cited in the State/USAID letter, with a reported increase from 44 years to more than 60 years in the past decade. The World Bank, however, purposely did not include the Mortality Survey results in a recent report because the survey does not have time-series data for the last 10 years. For comparative analysis, they argue, it is essential to use statistics from a single international database.^{viii} According to the World Bank figure, Afghan life expectancy is 48 years.

The indicators for education similarly appear to take credit for progress across the country as a whole without clear attribution to specific United States government efforts. The number of students enrolled is presented as the national total, but it is not clear what if any connection there is with the schools built and teachers trained through USAID efforts. I would have expected information such as the utilization rates of USAID-supported schools, as this would more clearly connect the United States government effort to the reported student numbers and additionally

would provide evidence of Afghan government capacity to make use of assets transferred to them.

The Department of Defense response offers some information with regard to Afghan government sustainment, but the examples are restricted to one province and cover only *three* of 4,000 education projects totaling \$230 million obligated. The World Bank has raised the issue of sustainment, noting that school construction, the same indicator touted in both letters, has crowded out operations and maintenance, with allocations falling far below requirements and rarely reaching schools.^{ix} The joint State/USAID and Department of Defense responses to education highlight my issue with the indicators presented, with the State/USAID response disconnected from USAID efforts and the Department of Defense relying on anecdotal evidence.^x

For another example, the Defense letter notes that more than 194,000 Afghan National Security Force personnel had “some level” of literacy and numeracy training. That is encouraging, but given that the 2009 rate of ANSF illiteracy was 86 percent^{xi} and that the ANSF has fairly high turnover, it does not tell us whether the effort has materially improved the overall ANSF literacy rate and, more importantly, improved it to the extent of bolstering administrative and operational success. In addition, the datum does not tell us whether the literacy program itself is efficiently conducted and monitored.

Finally, on the rule of law, I was disappointed to note that the indicators offered in the joint State/USAID response did not address two major areas of concern: high-level corruption and opium production. The letter notes that State and USAID have provided training and support to Afghan anti-corruption bodies, but unlike the prison statistics, does not give any indication of the effect, such as types and numbers of successful prosecutions. Sending 13 judges on an educational trip and putting court personnel through training courses are presumably useful activities, but such outputs need credible linkages to outcomes. Similarly, the indicators provided in reference to the drug trade note the scale of the problem, with Afghanistan accounting for roughly 90 percent of heroin worldwide, but does not connect improvements in the licit economy with decreases in the illicit economy. In 2012, the USAID Inspector General found that a key USAID alternative-development program was directed by USAID to focus only on expanding the licit economy in order to support indicators for the agriculture sector, such as those touted in the letter, and to ignore goals that dealt with assistance to voluntary poppy eradication and to farms in the aftermath of opium poppy eradication/destruction programs.^{xii} The report further states that there was increased poppy growth in the provinces covered by the program, with two of the covered provinces losing their poppy-free status and five provinces increasing opium cultivation. The impact of USAID’s agricultural programs on the licit economy are certainly laudable, but if they do not result in decreased opium cultivation then positive impacts are eroded.

National-level indicators *may* suggest a positive aggregate impact for U.S. programs, but individual results certainly vary within program portfolios of project, and positive aggregate outcomes may mask individual failures or sub-par performance. At times, it is even difficult to *identify* an individual result. Unfortunately the letters did not identify specific programs or the indicators and targets for those specific programs.

Just last month, the State Department’s Office of Inspector General published an audit of the Bureau of Administration (A Bureau), Office of Logistics Management, Office of Acquisitions Management (A/LM/AQM), which directs Department acquisition programs and manages a 1 percent fee for its services. Those services include operations, missions, and programs of the

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, as well as grants, contracts, and agreements with other nations, non-governmental organizations, and commercial entities. A portion of that State OIG audit mirrors my concerns and is worth noting here:

A/LM/AQM was tracking some metrics to assess program performance. However, these performance metrics also generally did not tie to the goals in the Business Plan. Without measuring its performance, A/LM/AQM cannot ensure it is making progress on its overall objective of providing consistent and improved procurement services to the Department.

Performance management is a systematic process of monitoring the achievements of program activities, which includes collecting and analyzing performance data in order to track progress toward a defined goal and then using the analyzed data to make informed decisions, including allocating resources, for the program. Measuring performance against program goals is an essential part of performance management.^{xiii}

As for Defense, GAO has been carrying DOD contract management on its High-Risk List since 1992. In an audit of a military construction that created life-and-safety electrical and fire hazards for U.S. and other coalition personnel, the DOD IG found the responsible Air Force construction-management officials “did not develop a formal process to monitor, assess, and document the quality of work performed by contractor personnel for four projects valued at \$36.9 million.”^{xiv} Such voids in basic data make project comparisons even more difficult.

As you know, SIGAR’s own audits, investigations, and special projects have also addressed aspects of reconstruction program or project success and failure. But as the preceding citations to other IGs’ work illustrate, we are not alone in spotting issues. The large body of work by SIGAR, GAO, and your agency Inspectors General—not to mention numerous agency concurrences in the findings and recommendations in that work—amply documents that many programs and projects have systematic weaknesses in framing, planning, execution, and oversight that call out for improvement. Pursuant to our statutory mandate and as part of our participation in the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Afghanistan Reconstruction, we are preparing additional products for release and will be launching new initiatives touching on these concerns as the reconstruction effort proceeds.

As I explained in my March 25, 2013, letter, an important part of our work is understanding how U.S. agencies evaluate and perceive both their successes and failures. That understanding is critical for formulating lessons learned from our unprecedented reconstruction effort in Afghanistan—an effort already accounting for nearly \$89 billion in appropriations. U.S. government agencies need to identify and act on lessons learned from past reconstruction projects and programs. Timely action can help implementing agencies and Congress adjust reconstruction programs to protect taxpayer funds and improve outcomes before it is too late.

My letter of March 25 therefore formally requested that you provide:

- a list of the 10 Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed most successful by the [agency]
- a list of the 10 Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed least successful by the [agency]
- a detailed explanation of how these projects/programs were evaluated and selected as the 10 most and least successful projects, including the specific criteria used for each

Upon considering your responses to that request, I appreciate that identifying the 10 *most-* and 10 *least-*successful programs or projects in Afghanistan may entail an unreasonable benefit/cost burden of research and analytical rigor in comparisons across many initiatives. We have no wish to impose unproductive burdens upon your staff, especially when many may be inconvenienced by the impingement of sequestration-furloughs on their work hours. Therefore I will *modify* my request and now ask you to provide the following:

- a list of 10 of the *more* successful Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded by your agency
- a list of 10 of the *less* successful Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded by your agency
- an explanation of how you selected the projects in each list and your view of what made them more or less successful (e.g., goal framing, requirements identification, acquiring activity, agent performance, management, oversight and technical assessment, coordination) than intended

Note: In view of State's more limited program activity in Afghanistan, a reasonable response of fewer than 10 items in each category will be satisfactory.

Based on your responses, we will identify individual programs and projects for possible further examination through reviews or audits. This could lead us to look at programs or projects deemed to have achieved their objectives, as well as less successful undertakings. In addition to noting the criteria your agency used to evaluate the projects, the results of those evaluations, and any documented lessons learned, we could assess how well the projects achieved their stated objectives and whether they contributed to the larger strategic goals underlying the U.S. government's Afghan reconstruction efforts.

In addition, for each program examined, we will seek to answer the seven questions laid out in SIGAR's January 2013 Quarterly Report to Congress. These are seven questions that decision makers, including Congress, should ask as they consider whether and how best to use remaining reconstruction funds. The questions are:

1. Does the project or program make a clear and identifiable contribution to our national interests or strategic objectives?
2. Do the Afghans want it or need it?
3. Has it been coordinated with other U.S. implementing agencies, with the Afghan government, and with other international donors?
4. Do security conditions permit effective implementation and oversight?
5. Does it have adequate safeguards to detect, deter, and mitigate corruption?
6. Do the Afghans have the financial resources, technical capacity, and political will to sustain it?
7. Have implementing partners established meaningful, measurable metrics for determining successful project outcomes?

We believe our reviews and audits, by helping to understand and document how agencies are planning strategically for reconstruction spending, establishing program objectives, evaluating programs, and identifying lessons learned, will contribute to improving the efficiency and

effectiveness of critical reconstruction programs and mitigate fraud, waste, and abuse. SIGAR will continue to make every effort to see that Congress and the implementing agencies are fully informed about the progress of the reconstruction effort—including discussions of agency policy and practice that have led to *good* outcomes—and have the information they need to safeguard U.S. funds and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

I trust this letter clarifies the reasons for my March 25 request, and that my modification of terms fairly and reasonably addresses the concerns voiced in your previous responses. I look forward to your response and our continued cooperation in support of the national mission in Afghanistan.

Sincerely,



John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable James B. Cunningham, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Notes

ⁱ Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, “Use of Evidence and Evaluation in the 2014 Budget,” May 18, 2012, p. 2.

ⁱⁱ United States Agency for International Development, *ADS Chapter 203 – Assessing and Learning*, November 2012, p. 18.

ⁱⁱⁱ USFOR-A, *Money as a Weapon System—Commander’s Emergency Response Program SOP*, March 2012, pp. 177-178

^{iv} *Ibid*, p. 40.

^v CIA, “World Fact Book,” online, accessed June 19, 2013.

^{vi} USAID OIG, *Audit Of USAID/Afghanistan’s On-Budget Funding Assistance to the Ministry of Public Health in Support of the Partnership Contracts for Health Services Program*, Audit Report F-306-11-004-P, September 29, 2011, p. 3.

^{vii} Afghan Public Health Institute. *Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010*, p 10.

^{viii} World Bank, *Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014 Volume 2*, May 2012, p. 12.

^{ix} World Bank, *Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014 Volume 2*, May 2012, pp. 88-89.

^x The World Bank report further notes that the lack of operations and maintenance funds has caused education infrastructure to deteriorate, and that the current school population is also heavily concentrated in grades 1–4, with high dropout rates in higher grades. The World Bank states that widespread concerns exist over education quality, owing to the poor qualifications of some teachers, lack of a standardized

curriculum, lack of evaluation standards, and insufficiency of basic school supplies. Statistics collected in 2009–10 by a national teacher-registration system indicate that only 27 percent of the 162,000 registered general-education teachers are educated at a grade 14 level, the official minimum requirement for teaching, or higher.

^{xi} Statement of Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, Commander, United States Army North, Fifth Army, before the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations, hearing, Sept. 12, 2012.

^{xii} USAID OIG *Audit Of USAID/Afghanistan's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West Program*, Audit Report F-306-12-004-P, June 29, 2012, p. 5.

^{xiii} State OIG, AUD-FM-13-29, *Audit of Department of State Application of the Procurement Fee to Accomplish Key Goals of Procurement Services*, May 2013, p. 50.

^{xiv} DOD IG, Report No. DODIG-2013-052, *Inadequate Contract Oversight of Military Construction Projects in Afghanistan Resulted in Increased Hazards to Life and Limb of Coalition Forces*, March 8, 2013, i.



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

March 25, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
U.S. Secretary of State

Dear Secretary Kerry,

As you know, my office is charged by Congress with the responsibility for leading, coordinating, and recommending policies to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs and operations for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The audits, inspections, and investigations that SIGAR conducts form the basis for our execution of this responsibility.

In a recent conversation with the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, I mentioned that we would be looking at the most and least successful reconstruction projects, as identified by U.S. agencies. I believe that this will be a valuable exercise. It is important to understand how U.S. agencies evaluate and perceive both their successes and failures. Such an understanding is critical for formulating lessons learned from our unprecedented reconstruction effort.

Therefore, I formally request that you provide:

- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed most successful by the Department of State;
- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed least successful by the Department of State; and
- a detailed explanation of how these projects/programs were evaluated and selected as the ten most and least successful projects, including the specific criteria used for each.

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 this information by April 25, 2013, to Monica Brym, SIGAR Director of Special Projects, at monica.j.brym.civ@mail.mil. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 545-6000 or Ms. Brym at (703) 545-6003. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

cc: The Honorable James B. Cunningham, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

March 25, 2013

The Honorable Rajiv Shah
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development

Dear Dr. Shah,

As you know, my office is charged by Congress with the responsibility for leading, coordinating, and recommending policies to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs and operations for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The audits, inspections, and investigations that SIGAR conducts form the basis for our execution of this responsibility.

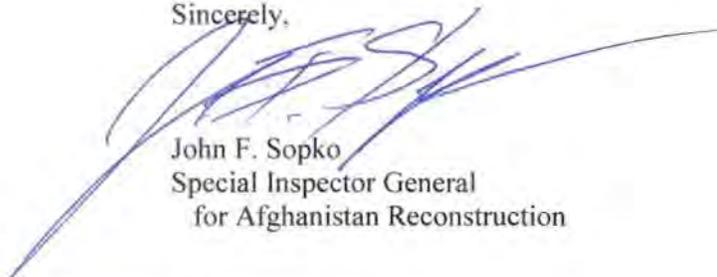
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Therefore, I formally request that you provide:

- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed most successful by USAID;
- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed least successful by USAID; and
- a detailed explanation of how these projects/programs were evaluated and selected as the ten most and least successful projects, including the specific criteria used for each.

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 this information by April 25, 2013, to Monica Brym, SIGAR Director of Special Projects, at monica.j.brym.civ@mail.mil. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 545-6000 or Ms. Brym at (703) 545-6003. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

cc: Dr. S. Ken Yamashita, USAID Mission Director for Afghanistan



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

March 25, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense

Dear Secretary Hagel,

As you know, my office is charged by Congress with the responsibility for leading, coordinating, and recommending policies to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs and operations for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The audits, inspections, and investigations that SIGAR conducts form the basis for our execution of this responsibility.

In a recent conversation with the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, I mentioned that we would be looking at the most and least successful reconstruction projects, as identified by U.S. agencies. I believe that this will be a valuable exercise. It is important to understand how U.S. agencies evaluate and perceive both their successes and failures. Such an understanding is critical for formulating lessons learned from our unprecedented reconstruction effort.

Therefore, I formally request that you provide:

- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed most successful by the Department of Defense;
- a list of the ten Afghanistan reconstruction projects/programs funded and deemed least successful by the Department of Defense; and
- a detailed explanation of how these projects/programs were evaluated and selected as the ten most and least successful projects, including the specific criteria used for each.

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 this information by April 25, 2013, to Monica Brym, SIGAR Director of Special Projects, at monica.j.brym.civ@mail.mil. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 545-6000 or Ms. Brym at (703) 545-6003. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

cc:

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, and
Commander, International Security Assistance Force
General James N. Mattis, Commander, U.S. Central Command



May 9, 2013

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)

SUBJECT: SIGAR Letter to the Department of State, USAID and Department of Defense Requesting Top Most Successful and Least Successful Projects

In response to your letter of March 25, we are pleased to report on some of the accomplishments of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan in recent years, as well as on some of the problems that we have faced in implementing foreign assistance.

Our agencies have chosen to respond jointly to highlight our close cooperation in achieving measurable results from our assistance efforts in Afghanistan in support of our national security goal of ensuring Afghanistan can no longer be a safe haven for terrorists that threaten U.S. interests. From a society shattered by more than three decades of war, and after more than a decade of rebuilding, there is now significant statistical data outlining Afghanistan's steady progress, despite the political, economic, and security challenges presented by that turbulent past.

We monitor and evaluate individual projects against the detailed standards and outcomes established in the initial performance documents. Given the wide range of assistance projects and programs our agencies have carried out, we do not compare individual projects against others, particularly over a decade of intensive rebuilding efforts, which result in constantly changing conditions for each project. We also recognize that achieving our strategic goals in any particular sector in Afghanistan requires a number of projects working together over time -- including those using other donors' funds.

In Part I below, we highlight assistance programs that have contributed to measurable positive impacts on Afghanistan's development and stability. The achievements are based on objective indicators of progress including improvement on international indices for human, economic, and democratic development. In Part II, we highlight the problems we have encountered in ensuring the most cost-effective use of taxpayer dollars in achieving these gains and the methods we use to overcome them.

Part I: Measurable Results

In the education sector, there are clear indicators of progress. In 2002, only an estimated 900,000 boys, and virtually no girls, were in school. Now, there are 8 million students enrolled in school, more than a third of whom are girls. University enrollment has increased from 8,000 in 2001 to 77,000 in 2011. USAID has supported these gains by building 605 schools, training

teachers, and developing university teaching degree programs. Multiple implementers, donors and coordinated projects are responsible for these achievements. Additionally, the Embassy's Public Affairs Section funded the Bagch-i-simsim (Sesame Street) radio project. This project builds upon the success of the television project with the same name and targets millions of young rural Afghan children who do not have access to a television. The program's themes spread the values of tolerance, fairness, and peaceful resolution of conflict. Twenty-six different episodes of 30 minutes each in Dari and Pashto are broadcast on multiple radio stations throughout the country. Each show includes original content that is aligned with the Ministry of Education's early childhood educational framework.

Other U.S. Government-sponsored education programs target other equally important audiences and are designed to build capacity in critical government sectors and achieve foreign policy goals. In November 2012, the State Department hosted a two-week training program in Washington for 13 Afghan diplomats in partnership with the Public Diplomacy Council and the University of Maryland. Through formal training sessions, lectures, interactive simulations, and site visits, the Afghan visitors developed their practical skills as diplomats and gained better understanding of United States culture and policy, particularly the importance of women's rights and human rights. The importance of regular interaction with a free and independent media in a democracy was also highlighted.

The program was the second phase of a joint training program for Afghan diplomats; the first phase was sponsored by the Government of China and took place in Beijing in May. By building the capacity of the staff of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we enhanced its professionalism and its ability to work cooperatively and effectively with the U.S. government and other countries, as well as NGOs, media outlets, universities, businesses, and religious institutions.

In the field of public health, since the displacement of the Taliban, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health has been successful in rebuilding the healthcare system with low cost, high impact interventions, to improve the health of Afghans, primarily women and children. With substantial support from the United States and other donors, access to basic health services (defined as a person's ability to reach a facility within one hour by foot) has risen from 9 percent in 2001 to more than 60 percent today, and more than 22,000 health workers have been trained *through multiple projects*.

According to the Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, Afghanistan has seen a rise in life expectancy from 44 years to more than 60, or an increase of 15-20 years, in the last decade. The under-five mortality rate has been reduced from 172 to 97 deaths per 1,000 live births. The estimated maternal mortality ratio declined significantly from 1,600 per 100,000 births to 327 per 100,000 births. The number of functioning primary health care facilities increased from 498 in 2002 to over 1,970 in 2010.

The gains made in the health sector are due to a coordinated effort by the donor community in the early stages of the rebuilding efforts, a focus on providing low-cost basic health services, and a determination by the Afghans to strengthen the Ministry of Public Health. These are long-term

programs that span multiple donors, and various contractors and grantees over a decade of determined focus by the health teams at USAID and the international community in concert with the Afghan Government.

In public financial management, USAID's support has helped the Afghan government grow its internal revenue collection by almost 20 percent per year since 2002. Domestic revenue is critical to reduce the Afghan government's reliance on foreign assistance and to promote long-term sustainable growth through investment in infrastructure and services. In 2010/11, domestic revenue reached \$1.7 billion or 11 percent of GDP, exceeding the IMF target of 9.2 percent per year. Revenue from Customs is the fastest-growing segment, increasing more than 400 percent since 2006. USAID's programs have assisted the Afghan government to develop a centralized Customs collection system, contributing to the sharp increases in annual Customs revenues. Afghan domestic revenue collection has underperformed in 2012, and USAID is working with the Ministry of Finance to identify potential reasons and remedial actions to address the shortfall.

To promote the role of women in Afghan politics, culture, and business, our work has helped Afghan women take on larger roles in society. Today, almost 20 percent of Afghans enrolled in higher education are women. Twenty seven percent of seats in the Parliament, one governor, three cabinet, and 120 judicial positions are now held by women. Hundreds of women's organizations are working to end violence and discrimination against women, and the Afghan Government has committed to ensuring that by 2013 at least 30 percent of government employees are women.

The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) funds Women for Afghan Women to operate Children's Support Centers (CSCs) in Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and Kunduz. The CSCs provide housing and educational services for children who would otherwise be in prison with their incarcerated mothers. The majority of these children have had little to no formal education prior to arriving. CSC-educated children are at the top of their classes and some have been placed in advanced study programs abroad. Children are allowed to stay at the CSC until they turn 18 years of age (even after their mothers are released), allowing their mothers to have the time needed to construct a stable home environment. INL's commitment to helping these children improve their lives has been key to the overall success of this program.

INL also supports the operations of nine women's shelters across Afghanistan and the Afghan Women's Shelter Network, which brings together Afghan shelter providers to discuss best practices and advocate for victims. INL's support has expanded the number of provinces where services are available to victims of gender-based violence and discrimination and facilitated an Afghan-led campaign to increase public acceptance of women's shelters. We have seen an increase in government referrals to and political support for the shelters, indicating that the Afghan government is starting to accept shelters as legitimate resources for women seeking legal and protective services. Shelters have been provided multi-year funding that extends into 2015. In 2012, INL-funded shelters benefited approximately 2,000 women and children in 30 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

To promote access to reliable electricity, USAID assistance has included hydro-electric and solar facilities, and has focused on making the Afghan national power company (DABS) self-sustaining through increased revenue collection and increased efficiency. In 2002, only 6 percent of Afghans had access to reliable electricity. Today nearly 30 percent do, including more than 2 million people in Kabul who now benefit from electric power 24 hours a day. DABS has increased revenues country-wide by roughly 50 percent from 2010 to 2012. This represents hundreds of millions of dollars saved in subsidies from U.S. taxpayers and other donors. The success of DABS over such a short period of time, four years, is a remarkable achievement.

To promote good governance and the rule of law in Afghanistan, INL has, through its implementing partner, assisted the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Centers (GDPDC) in improving its capability to operate safe, secure, and humane Afghan correctional facilities. This is particularly important, given the sharp increases in arrests and prosecutions, which caused the prison population to grow dramatically from 600 prisoners in 2001 to more than 27,000 in 2013. Despite poor infrastructure, comparatively low staff salaries, and a 17 percent annual inmate growth rate, the GDPDC has built and maintained humane facilities, worked to separate National Security Threat (NST) inmates from common criminals, and implemented standard operating procedures in line with international standards in an expanding number of prisons and detention centers. These improvements can be attributed in part to comprehensive hands-on mentoring and training by INL's Corrections System Support Program (CSSP). CSSP advisors have trained 8,000 corrections officers since 2006, under rigorous oversight from INL's program managers and contracting personnel. INL's focus on training Afghan Government trainers not only created sustainable training capacity, but has resulted in the successful transfer of 90 percent of all corrections training activities to the Afghan government, an important milestone in the development of GDPDC's capabilities.

The State Department and USAID also provide training to the judicial sector and other elements of Afghan criminal justice institutions, for example, through the State Department's work with the Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP). The JCIP is a special Afghan court for the adjudication – under Afghan law, and by Afghan judges, prosecutors and defense counsel – of criminal charges filed by Afghan authorities against former U.S. Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) detainees. The JCIP is a partnership of the Afghan Supreme Court, Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, National Directorate of Security and Ministry of Defense, with support from Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, the Australian Agency for International Development, and INL.

Coordinated U.S. Government support enables the JCIP to hear thousands of cases and builds both the adjudicative capacity of the court and its personnel. The JCIP did not exist three years ago: it heard its first case in June 2010. The JCIP tried 31 primary court cases in 2010; 288 in 2011; 974 in 2012; and 780 in just the first four months of 2013. Even with its growing caseload, Afghan defense attorneys who have worked at the JCIP consistently describe the court as providing among the fairest trials in Afghanistan. INL provides formal training, daily mentoring, and operational support to nearly 100 Afghan judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and investigators in evidence-based criminal investigations and prosecutions. In addition to

strengthening the Afghans' ability to try the important national security cases at the JCIP, INL's capacity-building support allows these legal professionals to take the skills, experiences, and lessons learned from the JCIP to their next assignments, expanding the impact of INL's support across the Afghan justice system.

The Department of State's Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program has built and developed the Presidential Protective Service (PPS) into an effective dignitary protection unit. Beginning with the inception of the unit a year after 9/11, the ATA program has provided training, equipment and mentorship to several hundred PPS officers at the unit's camp facility. Not only has PPS received extensive training in tactical skills such as protection of national leadership, counter-assault, and defensive marksmanship, it has also institutionalized the wealth of information in those courses into its own training structure. Through participation in instructor development courses and ongoing work with ATA advisors, PPS has developed the ability to train its own officers in these specialized protective skills. In addition, Department of State-funded implementing partners have cleared more than 343,414,869 square meters of land and removed or destroyed approximately 8,049,260 landmines and other explosive remnants of war such as unexploded ordnance, abandoned ordnance, stockpiled munitions, and home-made explosives.

Part II: Problems and Solutions

The programmatic achievements noted above represent just part of the progress achieved by Afghanistan with the support and sacrifice of the United States and other donors over the past decade. Operating in a war-time environment means it is inevitable that not every program has succeeded as originally intended. Delays, fraud, poor performance, security challenges, contractor overcharges have been a too-constant feature of doing business in Afghanistan—and many of the obstacles we have encountered have been well documented and have benefited from SIGAR's oversight.

To fight corruption, we have worked aggressively to provide training and pressed the Afghan government to address corruption on a systematic basis. USAID is supporting the fight against corruption both in the way we do business, such as encouraging the use of mobile money to ensure wages are paid directly into personal accounts, and through projects like the Assistance for Afghanistan's Anticorruption Authority (4A), which supports the High Office of Oversight in the Afghan government to combat corruption.

To improve the rule of law and fight criminal activities, USAID and the Department of State work together in several areas. Afghanistan's role in the international drug trade – accounting for roughly 90 percent of heroin worldwide – contributes to increased crime, degrades the establishment of governance and the rule of law, undercuts the licit economy, and undermines public health. USAID and Department of State are working to reduce poppy cultivation by strengthening the Afghan Government's capacity to combat the drug trade and countering the link between narcotics and the insurgency. USAID's agricultural programs have helped establish 314,268 hectares with alternative crops, increased sales of licit farm and non-farm

products by \$273,333,642, benefited 2,519,420 families, and created 192,686 full-time equivalent jobs between FY 2008 - 2012.

Growth of the nation's licit economy is impeded by a largely illiterate workforce that lacks vital technical skills, as well as credit and banking systems that are underdeveloped and fragile. Meanwhile, porous borders encourage unlawful trade. These challenges, plus corruption and security concerns, continue to hinder physical and capital investment, especially by the private sector.

Inadequate security and a shortage of skilled technicians, engineers and construction workers hinder the construction and maintenance of critical infrastructure. Construction supplies often have to be imported, significantly increasing project costs.

Across sectors, a persistent insurgency and difficult security environment have made the mission much harder, despite the strong presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). As an example, on one USAID road project, 19 people were killed while working on construction, and 364 security incidents were reported. Security dangers often slow progress, and daily activities are made more complicated by an atmosphere of opportunism, corruption and lawlessness.

To effectively monitor the use of taxpayers' funds where there is a lack of capacity, USAID and State employ numerous oversight mechanisms at every project phase —from awarding the contract to reviewing payment claims, to overseeing the performance of our implementing partners. The Afghanistan mission uses these and more. In remote, insecure areas, USAID's monitoring and evaluation efforts are supplemented by third-party evaluators. As you are aware, in addition to our work with your office, we also work with a variety of independent oversight entities, including the State and USAID Offices of the Inspectors General and the U.S. Government Accountability Office and share the goal of ensuring U.S. funding is not wasted or abused.

In addition, by monitoring and evaluating outcomes, we are constantly seeking new ways to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used most effectively, focusing on the return on our project investment. Administrator Shah issued Sustainability Guidance to ensure that every USAID program supports increased Afghan ownership, contributes to stability, and makes the most of limited funds. Department of State programs conduct similar analyses in developing projects.

In Afghanistan, USAID is strengthening award mechanisms, vetting, financial controls and project oversight, working closely with our Afghan and ISAF counterparts. On an interagency level, databases such as FACTS Info and Afghan Info allow USAID and the Department of State to share project information, metrics, best practices and more. With Afghans, we have also launched the Assistance for Afghanistan's Anti-Corruption Authority series of initiatives to encourage transparency and accountability. This includes helping the Afghan government develop a strong anti-corruption policy and establishing a joint committee with U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and ISAF on contractor vetting and corruption.

To ensure accountability, some projects are drastically altered or funding stopped. USAID's rigorous emphasis on evaluation led us to take a hard look at the Strategic Provincial Roads project in eastern and southern Afghanistan. After three years, project outcomes were falling far short of project objectives. To avoid continued investment of taxpayer funds into an under-performing program, USAID ended the project in fall 2011.

In other cases, program benefits merited continued investment-with strategic recommendations for improvements. The National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan had reached thousands of communities, but payment delays and operating risks in insecure areas threatened to limit future outreach. Today, the program tracks indicators of good governance, such as transparency and accountability, and an inter-ministerial committee is exploring the role existing community development councils can play for expansion into insecure areas.

In June 2009, after the Afghan Government took back control of its central prison from insurgent inmates, INL began a comprehensive renovation. Poor contractor performance and corruption led the Department to halt renovations and terminate the contract.. The problems with this project highlighted the need to have an adequate number of Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs), Governmental Technical Monitors (GTMs), engineers, and program officers on the ground to provide oversight. Recognizing the need to improve oversight of construction projects, INL has significantly increased the number of U.S. and locally engaged (LE) engineers in Afghanistan and has strengthened its review and management policies.

To promote dialogue among tribal elders and the Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs, a State public diplomacy project planned to conduct jirgas and shuras with government and local leaders. However, the implementing partner, Afghan Community Consulting, was unable to obtain adequate cooperation from the Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs, particularly with regard to oversight of funds, or evidence of the number of participants and outcomes. When it was determined that adequate oversight could not be achieved on spending or outcomes, PAS Kabul terminated the grant, suspended future jirgas, and determined the amount of funds owed to the embassy for incomplete work, which were all returned.

We appreciate this opportunity to highlight a number of our programmatic achievements with the Afghan government and people over the past decade, as well as to note those areas where continuing attention is warranted given the challenges of operating in Afghanistan. We share SIGAR's goal of safeguarding U.S. taxpayer resources from fraud, waste, and abuse, and advance while seeking the most effective uses of those resources in advancing our nation's national security through assistance programs in Afghanistan. We look forward to working together to find ways to improve our oversight mechanisms.

Sincerely,



Daniel Feldman
Deputy Special Representative
for Afghanistan and Pakistan



J Alexander Thier
Assistant to the Administrator
for Afghanistan and Pakistan



ASIAN AND PACIFIC
SECURITY AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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June 18, 2013

Mr. John Sopko
Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)
1550 Crystal Drive
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Sopko,

In response to your letter of March 25, 2013, the Department of Defense (DoD) reviewed reconstruction activities in Afghanistan and prepared the enclosed overview of successes and challenges. The U.S., Coalition, and Afghan partners have reached a decisive milestone in the campaign. Later this month, the Afghan government and the ANSF will formally assume lead security responsibility across all of Afghanistan. This is the Afghans' greatest demonstration to date of real progress towards stability and sovereignty. The enclosed response provides an overview of what we have done to get to this point and some of the things we are focused on to sustain these gains.

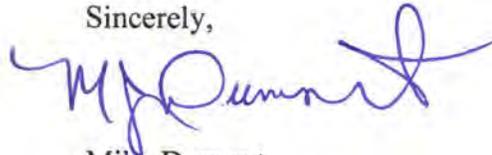
The DoD reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan aim to expand security and stability in order to achieve our core objectives: to ensure al Qaeda never again uses it as a safe haven to conduct international terrorists attacks and to ensure the Taliban do not overthrow the Afghan Government. Since the initiation of the campaign in Afghanistan, the DoD has provided support to a wide range of reconstruction activities with impact on the security, economic, and governance sectors. Many reconstruction programs are conducted together with other U.S. agencies and Coalition partners as part of the integrated civil-military campaign. Typically, reconstruction programs are evaluated on an individual basis according to program-specific criteria and their contribution towards our broader objectives in Afghanistan. Our main metrics for how we are achieving these objectives are specified in statute and are reported on in our semi-annual "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan." We also provide extensive information for your quarterly reports to Congress on these efforts.

The enclosed information on the DoD priority reconstruction activities highlights progress and challenges experienced in the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and select infrastructure programs. The response reviews the positive impact of DoD efforts to grow, train, and equip the ANSF and identifies capability shortfalls that persist. It also highlights the social, economic and security benefits that accrue from a multitude of DoD-funded infrastructure projects while acknowledging the challenges that remain, including growing the capacity of the Afghan government to sustain critical infrastructure.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide this assessment of ongoing reconstruction projects and programs in Afghanistan. We want to ensure that American taxpayers are getting the results they expect from our reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. We appreciate the important role that the Special Inspector General plays to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those programs and operations, and we will continue to work together to ensure proper oversight and accountability of government funds.

Sincerely,



Mike Dumont
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
Asian & Pacific Security Affairs

Attachments: Department of Defense Response to SIGAR March 25 Inquiry

Department of Defense Response to SIGAR March 25 Inquiry

Security Sector Reconstruction

Among the multiple lines of effort in Afghanistan, the Department of Defense's central effort has been the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) into a force capable of assuming lead security responsibility throughout Afghanistan and providing for its own internal security. As a result of the concerted effort by the Afghans, U.S. and Coalition partners, we have seen a significant turnaround in the security sector in Afghanistan.

As of late 2002, the Afghan government did not have legitimate control of any of the security elements in Afghanistan. The Afghan National Army (ANA) was established in early 2003, followed in 2005 by the Afghan National Police (ANP), but for years both suffered from poor leadership, low training standards, inadequate equipment and the absence of a sustainment system. As of 2009, the ANSF still lacked combat capability to meet its internal security requirements. The combined military and police forces totaled approximately 200,000, and the mission was largely confined to guard duty at static check-points. The ANSF lacked hardened vehicles, possessed limited fire support with no indirect engagement capability and had rudimentary aircraft with no casualty evacuation capability. They were further constrained by insufficient ammunition, small arms and a minimal ability to resupply. The ANSF throughout Afghanistan were understrength, fragmented, and devoid of the basic skills necessary to coordinate operations at echelons above the kandak or battalion level. The ANSF were not capable of securing Afghanistan, and U.S. and Coalition forces bore almost all the burden—and casualties—of this mission.

In late 2009, with President Obama's announcement of the U.S. troop surge, a concerted Coalition effort to grow the ANSF was initiated, with the goal of generating and fielding trained and equipped Afghan combat elements capable of pushing back the Taliban and establishing security in populated areas. A combined ANSF and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partnership established training programs and an equipping plan to rapidly develop ANSF combat capabilities. Unit partnering between Afghan and ISAF forces, enabled by the troop surge, provided the space to develop ANSF capabilities and leadership skills from the tactical level up. This resulted in a current force of over 340,000 military and police personnel with proven capabilities in counterinsurgency operations with increasing coordination across the Army, Police, and intelligence personnel. Although nascent, the ANA has demonstrated an emerging ability to conduct more complex combined arms operations by synchronizing infantry, artillery and other combat capabilities at the Corps/Brigade level. In some areas, the ANSF have implemented a layered security concept that decreases vulnerabilities in any single arm of the force by leveraging the capabilities of the entire force (e.g., Afghan Local Police (ALP), ANA Special Operations Forces (ANASOF), ANA, ANP, Afghan Border Police (ABP), National Directorate of Security (NDS), etc.), providing security to the Afghan people with minimal or no assistance from the Coalition.

The ANSF, and especially the ANA, have made remarkable progress, particularly since early 2012. In late 2012, the ANA had no corps/division headquarters and only one of the 23 Afghan National Army (ANA) brigade headquarters capable of conducting independent operations. Today the ANA

has one corps/division headquarters, five brigade headquarters and 27 battalions capable of operating independently. Another six ANA Corps/Divisions, 16 ANA Brigades and 71 battalions are rated as “Effective with Advisors.” ANP units have also improved, with 44 units rated as “Independent with Advisors” and a further 86 units rated as “Effective with Advisors.”¹ The growing ANA Special Operations Command (ANASOC) has also made strides towards becoming an independent and effective force – with the vast majority of ANA special operations forces (SOF) missions, to include night operations, being Afghan-led. The ANSF are now leading over 80 percent of total operations and carrying out many unilaterally. ISAF unilateral operations account for less than 10 percent of total operations nationwide, and in many provinces, ISAF unilateral operations account for less than 1 percent. The Afghan government will soon announce Milestone 2013: recognizing the Afghan assumption of security lead for 100 percent of the population and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will shift to an advisor-support role.

A few areas of development are highlighted below to show the impact of the combined U.S. and Coalition forces security force assistance programs to the ANSF:

- **Build.** The ANSF have grown 73 percent in overall numbers since 2009. This growth is extraordinary given that the ANSF have been actively engaged in combat operations while building the force. In addition, the Afghan Local Police, a village-based security program administered by Ministry of Interior (MoI) and aimed at expanding security and governance, has also grown at a steady pace from 3,100 in January 2011 to over 21,000 in March 2013. An emerging ANSF maneuver capability is the Mobile Strike Force (MSF), an armored, wheel-based platform conceived to rapidly reinforce infantry units. The fielding of seven MSF kandaks has begun and is projected to be complete by December 2014.
- **Equipping.** The total Afghan security forces consist of six ANA combat corps, an ANASOC, which includes an Afghan Special Mission Wing, hundreds of ANP units, and an ALP equipped with more than 14,700 up-armored vehicles; 68,900 other combat support vehicles; half a million pieces of weaponry, including more than 1,500 indirect-fire weapons; 193,000 pieces of communications equipment; 10,500 night-vision devices; and a growing counter-IED capability consisting of 24 Route Clearance Company units with 457 mine rollers.
- **Training development.** Through professional development branch schools, including the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, and institutional training centers, including the premier Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), the ANSF have received leadership and technical training to develop the capabilities needed to sustain the force. To augment training capacity, the ANA and ANP are using mobile training teams to provide professional training to personnel fielded without training at branch schools. In accordance with the overall Transition, the ANSF developed a self-training capability, via the “Train the

¹ “Independent with Advisors” is defined as the unit being able to plan and execute its mission and, if necessary, can call for and integrate joint effects from Coalition forces. “Effective with Advisors” means that the Coalition provides only limited, occasional guidance to staff and may provide enablers that are missing from higher or lower ANSF units.

Instructor” program and have grown their number of instructors by 60% since 2010. The ANSF now conducts 85 percent of all training, including all basic courses.

- **Sustainment.** The ability of the Afghan forces to supply and sustain themselves remains a significant challenge and is a focus of current DoD assistance. As their capabilities develop, the ANSF are gradually taking responsibility for combat service support and sustainment responsibilities, including distribution, maintenance, ammunition management, fuel and other classes of supply at the national and regional logistics nodes and institutions. Several classes of supply including Class I Subsistence (food and water), Class II Individual Equipment (clothing), Class IV (construction materiel), and Class VI (personal items) have already been fully transitioned to ANSF control. For the MoD, the Central Movement Agency (CMA) conduct monthly resupply missions to the ANA forces on their own from the Central Supply Depot (CSD).
- **Literacy.** Widespread Afghan illiteracy also poses a challenge for developing the ANSF into a sustainable force with the requisite technical and leadership skills. Literacy training efforts for the ANSF have been expansive to tackle this issue. Between November 2009 and April 2013, over 194,000 ANSF personnel passed some level of Dari and/or Pashto literacy and numeracy training, including over 57,000 who have achieved Level 3 literacy. As of April 2013, over 73,000 ANSF personnel are in some form of literacy training.
- **Ministerial development.** The Ministries of Defense and Interior must have the capacity to organize, resource, train, and sustain their forces, and to exercise command and control over them. With the ANSF force structure nearly complete, the DoD is focused on ministerial development and is adjusting an existing program to deploy DoD functional experts to help develop crucial ministry capabilities, such as: resource management; acquisition; contracting; strategy and policy development; and human resources management.

While the ANSF have demonstrated remarkable progress, shortfalls persist in some enabler areas, including command and control, intelligence fusion, logistics, counter-IED, fire support, and air support. Having realized the goal of growing and equipping the ANSF into a force capable of assuming the lead security role, we have shifted emphasis to increasing the quality and professionalism of the ANSF. As we move beyond combat operation capability to more technical areas, we are building off the literacy improvement to increase professionalism, upgrade intelligence capability and improve the sustainment systems (including logistics and maintenance). Many of the units that remain to be fielded are specialty units and critical enablers and will require more time to receive training that is more technical in nature. The DoD developed a plan to accelerate the development of enabler capabilities, including expanded training in logistics, maintenance, engineering, and intelligence. The FY14 DoD budget request for Afghan Security Forces Fund includes \$2.6B to support this effort.

The progress made by the ISAF-led surge has put the Afghan government in control of all Afghanistan’s major cities and 34 provincial capitals. ISAF’s focus is now shifting from directly fighting the insurgency to supporting the ANSF in holding these gains. Through the ISAF Security Force Assistance Team (SFAT) concept of train, advise, and assist, we expect the

ANSF will take full security responsibility for Afghanistan while simultaneously gaining proficiency in combat enablers and combat service support systems.

Construction and Infrastructure Development

The Department of Defense has also provided support to numerous projects and programs focused on developing civilian and military infrastructure that enable social, economic, governance, and security improvements that bring stability to Afghanistan. These efforts help strengthen the connection between the Afghan population and the district, provincial and national governments, facilitate access to security, healthcare and commerce, and help maintain security and stability gains. Below are some illustrative project and program highlights of the impact these activities have had and the benefit they provide to the overall mission:

Security Sector Infrastructure

ISAF is nearing completion of its infrastructure building program for the ANSF, which will deliver the final 429 projects by December 2014 and result in a program end state of more than 3,900 separate structures, valued at \$9.4 billion, built for both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. These include national and regional headquarters, military hospitals, training centers and schools, and forward operating bases, and have helped expand the reach of the security, governmental, and medical services. This program is continuously reviewed to ensure that the current infrastructure projects are still valid requirements, and has resulted in the reduction in total cost of the ANSF program from the originally planned \$11.38 billion to \$9.41 billion. As these projects come to completion, facility maintenance will be a challenge. Both ANSF organic capability and contracting support to maintain facilities are still nascent and the number of assigned facility engineers for both MoD and MoI are below targets. As a bridging strategy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) provides facility maintenance and training for a period of up to six months following construction completion, allowing time to build the capabilities of assigned Afghan engineers.

Civil Sector Reconstruction

The DoD recognizes education as a priority for increasing security and stability and continues to use the Commander's Emergency Response Fund (CERP) to advance development in this area. The DoD has obligated more than \$230 million in CERP funds to support more than 4000 projects aimed at improving the education of Afghan students, including building and refurbishing schools, and the purchase and distribution of millions of textbooks for math, science, language, civics, history, and cultural studies.

CERP projects in Farah highlight these contributions. A series of schools were built in Farah province over the past few years and are successfully staffed and maintained by the Afghan ministry of education, including Zehken School, Lash Juwain High School, Qala Zaman High School, Mirman Nazo High School, Runaakha School, and the Pir Kunder School.

- Zehken Girls School Project. A school built specifically for the education of girls in the northwestern district of Anar Dara in Farah province was completed in July of 2009 and has

been educating girls in Anar Dara ever since. Teachers and building maintenance are supplied by the Ministry of Education.

- Lash Juwain High School Project. This secondary school built in the southwestern district of Lash Juwain is one of the few High Schools in the region. It was completed in 2008 and has continuously educated students since then.
- Runaakha Girls School Project. This girls' school was built in the First District of Farah City in 2006 and has been continuously used and maintained since then.

In the first quarter of 2013, the DoD funded the procurement and delivery of desks and chairs for students in Mazar-e-Sharif who would otherwise sit on classroom floors due to overcrowding. As the operational environment has matured with more emphasis on stabilization and enabling governance, support for education programs is even more critical, especially for increasing the role of women within the Afghan government and society.

The DoD has also provided substantial support to building and refurbishing healthcare facilities throughout Afghanistan, and recently completed the construction of a small district hospital in Shindand that brings a higher level of medical care to over 240,000 Afghans.

The DoD has played a key role in providing increased electrical power to the restive areas of Kandahar and Helmand provinces. The Kandahar Bridging Solution, initiated through CERP, and maintained with the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund, rapidly provided additional electricity to the Kandahar City area helping to increase stability and security in the area. The power project increased the availability and reliability of electricity to hundreds of thousands of residents and facilitates employment, communication, healthcare, education and industry. While in 2010 there were only three factories in the Shorandam Industrial Park powered by their own small generators, there are now roughly 66 factories in Shorandam with the additional power made available through the Kandahar Bridging Solution.

Finally, the DoD supports the development of road infrastructure. Improving the Afghan's ability to move freely around the country (both civilians and military) via paved road network is an important part of establishing and maintaining stability and security, enhancing economic development and improving the lives of the Afghan populace. The DoD has successfully built and refurbished a number of roads throughout Afghanistan. One prime example is the Nawa to Lashkar Gah road paving project in the southwest, funded by the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund, which provides an important link between Nawa and the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah. The highly successful paved road has increased security for the population, and improved access for many residents to the more sophisticated health care offered in Lashkar Gah. The road is also bolstering commerce between the two cities, decreasing the delivery time for perishable goods, and facilitating increased overall economic activity throughout the region.

While the Afghan government continues to develop the capability and capacity to sustain transportation networks and power infrastructure, the ministries responsible for maintaining this critical infrastructure still require continued training and assistance to adequately execute an Operations and Maintenance plan on the scale required for Afghanistan. Identification,

budgeting, and financing of externally financed assets will be a challenge facing transition. The Afghan government will have to maintain the political will for reforms to grow internal capacity in order to sustain existing infrastructure. Improvements in capacity will support both the budgeting processes for O&M costs, as well as the disbursement of the budget throughout the year, increasing the likelihood of sustainability for assets and service delivery.