

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



APRIL 1, 2021-JUNE 30, 2021

ABOUT THIS REPORT

A 2013 amendment to the Inspector General Act established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations and requires that the Lead IG submit quarterly reports to Congress on each active operation. The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD Inspector General (IG) as the Lead IG for Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS). The DoS IG is the Associate IG for the operation. The USAID IG participates in oversight of the operation.

The Offices of Inspector General (OIG) of the DoD, the DoS, and USAID are referred to in this report as the Lead IG agencies. Other partner agencies also contribute to oversight of OFS.

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out the Lead IG statutory responsibilities to:

- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of the operation.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the U.S. Government in support of the operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, investigations, and evaluations.
- Report quarterly to Congress and the public on the operation and activities of the Lead IG agencies.

METHODOLOGY

To produce this quarterly report, the Lead IG agencies submit requests for information to the DoD, the DoS, USAID, and other Federal agencies about OFS and related programs. The Lead IG agencies also gather data and information from other sources, including official documents, congressional testimony, policy research organizations, press conferences, think tanks, and media reports.

The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, investigations, or evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not audited the data and information cited in this report. The DoD, the DoS, and USAID vet the reports for accuracy prior to publication. For further details on the methodology for this report, see Appendix B.

CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

This report includes an appendix containing classified information about the U.S. counterterrorism mission and other U.S. Government activities in Afghanistan. The Lead IG provides the classified appendix separately to relevant agencies and congressional committees. Due to the coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic, the DoS and USAID Inspectors General did not provide information for or participate in the preparation of the classified appendix this quarter.

FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report to the U.S. Congress on Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS). This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

OFS has two complementary missions: the U.S. counterterrorism mission against al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K), and their affiliates in Afghanistan; and U.S. military participation in the NATO-led Resolute Support mission to develop the capacity of the Afghan security ministries and to train, advise, and assist the Afghan national defense and security forces.

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of OFS, as well as the work of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote the U.S. Government’s policy goals in Afghanistan, during the period of April 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies and our partner oversight agencies during the quarter. This quarter, the Lead IG and partner agencies issued 15 audit, inspection, and evaluation reports related to OFS.

Working in close collaboration, we remain committed to providing comprehensive oversight and timely reporting on OFS.



Handwritten signature of Sean W. O'Donnell in black ink.

Sean W. O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense



Handwritten signature of Diana Shaw in black ink.

Diana Shaw
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of State



Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Ullom in black ink.

Thomas J. Ullom
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International
Development



On the Cover

(Top row): U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken speaks at a meet and greet with U.S. Mission Afghanistan personnel in Kabul (DoS photo); Aircrew carry their gear into a C-17 Globemaster III (U.S. Air Force photo); The United States delivers Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses to Afghanistan (DoS photo); Aerial porters work with maintainers to load a CH-47 Chinook into a C-17 Globemaster III (U.S. Army photo). (Bottom row): High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems stage in Kuwait to support the safe and deliberate withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces from Afghanistan (U.S. Army National Guard photo).

MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL



Sean W. O'Donnell

I am pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) report on Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS). While this report describes significant events that occurred during the quarterly period ending June 30, 2021, the security situation in Afghanistan continues to evolve rapidly. The Taliban is increasingly challenging the stability of the Afghan government as the U.S. military shifts toward a new security assistance model with the majority of its assets positioned outside the country.

During this quarterly reporting period, the Biden Administration announced that U.S. and NATO forces would withdraw from Afghanistan no later than September 11, 2021. The administration added that it continued to evaluate the security requirements of a continued diplomatic and humanitarian presence in Afghanistan.

Military support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and the continued U.S. counterterrorism mission transitioned to an "over-the-horizon" support model during the withdrawal of personnel and retrograde of equipment. The DoD said that it would provide security assistance to the ANDSF going forward primarily through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, prioritizing contracted maintenance and training for aviation units, procurement and delivery of key supplies, and payment of soldier salaries.

During the withdrawal, the Taliban increased its campaign of violence against the ANDSF and civilians across the country. The then-U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Commander, General Austin Miller, said in late June that there had been a rapid loss of government-controlled district centers as the ANDSF struggled to defend against Taliban advances. General Miller added that Afghanistan was on a trajectory toward civil war as the quarter ended.

Despite the rise in violence, peace negotiations between the Afghan Islamic Republic and Taliban negotiating teams continued this quarter. However, they made no substantive progress. The DoS reported that the Taliban continued to engage in the peace process because the group seeks international legitimacy and assistance, as well as the removal of U.S. and UN sanctions.

As the DoD restructured its counterterrorism mission to locations outside of Afghanistan, ISIS-Khorasan exploited the political instability and rise in violence during the quarter by attacking minority sectarian targets and infrastructure to spread fear and highlight the Afghan government's inability to provide adequate security. Additionally, the Taliban continued to maintain its relationship with al-Qaeda, providing safe haven for the terrorist group in Afghanistan.

After the quarter ended, on August 12, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin informed Afghan President Ashraf Ghani that the "United States is reducing [its] civilian footprint" in Afghanistan with the deployment of additional U.S. forces to ensure the safe evacuation of personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. The Secretaries said that the United States remained committed to maintaining a strong diplomatic and security relationship with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Lead IG oversight remains critical to assess the effectiveness of U.S. support to Afghanistan following the withdrawal of U.S. forces. I look forward to working with my Lead IG colleagues to continue to provide oversight of and report on OFS and related U.S. Government activity in Afghanistan, as required by the IG Act.

Sean W. O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense





Aircrew carry their gear into a C-17 Globemaster III at al-Udeid Air Base, Qatar during drawdown operations from Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 14, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., announced that U.S. forces would begin their final withdrawal from Afghanistan on May 1 and leave completely no later than September 11, 2021.¹ The Taliban indicated that the continued presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan past the May 1 withdrawal deadline in the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement constitutes a breach of the agreement, but the insurgents generally refrained from attacking U.S. or NATO forces this quarter.² As U.S. troops—as well as their contractors and equipment—left Afghanistan, the DoD positioned assets in the region to provide cover for the withdrawal, including special operations forces, heavy bomber aircraft, and a second aircraft carrier strike group.³

As coalition forces withdrew, the Taliban increased its assault on district centers across Afghanistan. From May 1 to June 29, the Taliban more than doubled the number of district centers it controlled, from 73 to 157.⁴ An Afghan official reported that the Taliban conducted attacks in 21 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, according to media reporting.⁵ The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported that the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) “very likely will struggle” to defend and hold territory and reverse Taliban advances during the second half of 2021, and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Commander General Austin Miller said, “Civil war is certainly a path that can be visualized if [Afghanistan] continues on the trajectory it’s on.”⁶

The DIA reported that the Taliban maintains a relationship with al-Qaeda, providing safe haven for the terrorist group while publicly denying its presence in Afghanistan.⁷ The Taliban publicly claims that it is abiding by its commitments under the U.S.-Taliban agreement to prevent any group, including al-Qaeda, from using Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.⁸ However, the DIA stated that the Taliban is “very likely” requesting that al-Qaeda restrict its activities and downplaying the longstanding relationship between the groups as a means of ensuring the complete withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops.⁹ U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Commander General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., said if “left unmolested [al-Qaeda] are certainly going to rebuild, re-strengthen themselves, and we have no reason to doubt they...want to attack us in our homeland.”¹⁰

Following the withdrawal of U.S. forces, the DoD will provide the ANDSF with “over-the-horizon” support. According to the DoD, this support will primarily consist of continued financial assistance to the ANDSF, contracted maintenance and training for aviation units, delivery of supplies such as fuel and ammunition, and paying soldier salaries.¹¹ General McKenzie stated that post-withdrawal airstrikes will be focused “to keep pressure on ISIS and al-Qaeda,” not the Taliban.¹²

Ongoing peace talks between the Afghan Islamic Republic and Taliban negotiating teams in Doha, Qatar, continued this quarter but made no significant progress.¹³ The Taliban refused to participate in a planned peace conference in Istanbul, Turkey, causing organizers to postpone the conference indefinitely.¹⁴ Taliban negotiators did not agree to any significant concessions, as insurgent fighters made significant progress on



Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III speaks with Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Dr. Abdullah Abdullah at the Pentagon as President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani signs the guest book. (DoD photo)



the battlefield. However, the Taliban continued to engage in the peace process because the group seeks international legitimacy and assistance, as well as the removal of U.S. and UN sanctions, according to the DoS.¹⁵

Afghan nationals who have worked on behalf of the U.S. Government waited for approval of their special immigrant visa applications to enter the United States this quarter. These individuals face ongoing, serious threats while they remain in Afghanistan.¹⁶ Under a 2009 law, Afghans who face ongoing, serious threats of violence due to their employment with the U.S. Government or NATO are eligible to apply for special immigrant visas to resettle with their families in the United States.¹⁷ As of June 2021, there were more than 18,000 principal applicants who had applied for these visas, some of whom have had applications pending for years, according to media reporting.¹⁸ A 2020 DoS OIG review of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program found several problems with its

implementation, such as insufficient staffing levels resulting in an applicant backlog and implementation, such as the lack of a centralized database to effectively document the identity of locally employed staff and contractors and insufficient staffing levels resulting in an applicant backlog.¹⁹ The DoS reported that some applicants would have the option of relocating to a third-party country outside of Afghanistan to complete the application process.²⁰ After the end of the quarter, DoS officials stated to the press that the U.S. Government would provide transportation for eligible special immigrant visa applicants either directly to the United States or to a third country, such as Kuwait or Qatar, to complete their application process there.²¹

As U.S. military forces withdrew from Afghanistan, facilities formerly occupied by USFOR-A and the NATO Resolute Support mission were turned over to the Afghan government. In May, U.S. forces left Kandahar Airfield, which once hosted 26,000 U.S. and coalition troops, and transferred the military portion of this facility back to the Afghan Ministry of Defense.²² Shortly after the quarter ended, U.S. and NATO forces left Bagram Airfield, located about 40 miles north of Kabul.²³ In both cases, Afghan commanders alleged that departing U.S. troops did not properly coordinate with them to ensure a smooth transition.²⁴ Additionally, on June 25, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul took operational control of the former NATO Resolute Support Headquarters facility, adjacent to the embassy compound.²⁵

OFS Force Structure Realigned to Support Changing Mission

As the OFS mission transitions away from its previously active posture in Afghanistan, the DoD is realigning the entities supporting that effort to fit a new limited set of objectives. The new organizational structure is built around three separate and distinct organizations, each of which will report to USCENTCOM with no higher headquarters in Afghanistan. Some organizational entities and personnel positions will remain in Afghanistan, but most will be located in other countries. These new entities are:

- **Defense Security Cooperation Management-Office-Afghanistan (DSCMO-A):** Provide primarily over-the-horizon security assistance to the ANDSF, specifically in the areas of aviation maintenance and pilot and maintainer training; soldier pay; procurement and delivery of key supplies such as fuel, ammo and spare parts; and accountability.
- **Over-the-Horizon Counterterrorism (OTH-CT):** Ensure that the United States prevents Afghanistan from serving as a safe haven for terrorists intent on attacking the U.S. homeland, citizens, interest, allies, and partners.
- **USFOR-A Forward:** Provide security for U.S. interests in Afghanistan, including the U.S. Embassy.

As of the publication of this report, most of the details concerning these new entities were not yet finalized.²⁶ The Lead IG for OFS will continue to report on the evolving U.S. security mission and objectives in Afghanistan.

Lead IG Oversight Activities

Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic continued to constrain the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight of projects related to OFS during the quarter. Despite these constraints, the Lead IG agencies completed 15 reports related to OFS. These reports examined various activities and organizations that support OFS, including the effectiveness of the U.S. Central Command's (USCENTCOM) target development and post-strike civilian casualty assessment activities; DoS fire protection processes for DoS facilities, including staff residences at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul; and USAID processes to prevent, detect and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. As of June 30, 2021, 39 projects were ongoing, and 12 projects were planned.

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations related to OFS resulted in six criminal charges and two convictions. The investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 4 investigations, initiated 3 new investigations, and coordinated on 69 open investigations. The investigations involve procurement fraud, corruption, grant fraud, theft, program irregularities, computer intrusions, and human trafficking.

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; and abuse of authority. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. During the quarter, the investigator referred 10 cases to Lead IG agencies or other investigative organizations.

As the ANDSF struggled to resist Taliban advances and provide security for the population, Afghan power brokers increasingly began raising private militias.²⁷

Specifically, leaders associated with the former Northern Alliance—which opposed the Taliban during the 1990s—spoke openly of a “second resistance” and mobilized independent anti-Taliban forces.²⁸ One such leader told reporters that more than 100,000 militia leaders, fighters, and other stakeholders in northern Afghanistan have pledged support to his anti-Taliban movement amid concerns about the stagnant peace process, the U.S. withdrawal, and apparent Taliban gains against the ANDSF.²⁹ Despite the challenge of effectively integrating these private militias into a broader defense strategy, the Afghan government has welcomed their efforts against the Taliban.³⁰ In June, the Afghan government launched a “National Mobilization” campaign to provide direct support to these militias in their fight against the Taliban.³¹

Increased Taliban violence across Afghanistan limited access for humanitarian workers this quarter.³²

In April, the Taliban threatened the security and safety of humanitarian workers in Kunar province, specifically targeting female government, aid, and healthcare workers.³³ In some cases, implementers were physically unable to reach their target populations as supply routes were blocked by Taliban forces threatening to seize humanitarian cargo.³⁴ In March, the Taliban temporarily halted COVID-19 vaccination administration in areas under its control, only permitting efforts to resume under Taliban coordination and regulation.³⁵ USAID reported that it expects constraints on humanitarian access to increase as the Taliban and the ANDSF continue to fight for territorial control.³⁶





U.S. Navy F/A-18 E/F Super Hornets aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower during a Suez Canal Transit. (U.S. Navy photo)

STATUS OF OFS

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STATUS OF OFS

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

President Biden Announces September Withdrawal Deadline

On April 14, President Biden announced that his administration would not complete the conditions-based military withdrawal from Afghanistan by the May deadline agreed to by U.S. and Taliban negotiators in February 2020. Instead, he announced that U.S. forces would begin their final withdrawal on May 1, and U.S. and allied troops would leave Afghanistan no later than September 11, 2021.³⁷

President Biden stated in his April address that the administration was still determining what a continued diplomatic presence would look like in Afghanistan and how to ensure the security of U.S. diplomats, development workers, and other personnel. The President warned that “if [the Taliban] attack us as we draw down, we will defend ourselves and our partners with all the tools at our disposal.” Additionally, the President said, “We will keep providing assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.”³⁸

The Taliban has said that the continued presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan past the May 1 date referenced in the U.S.-Taliban agreement constitutes a breach of that agreement’s terms. A Taliban spokesman posted online, “this violation in principle has opened the way” for the Taliban “to take every counter-action it deems appropriate against the occupying forces.”³⁹ However, as of the end of this quarter, although the Taliban were believed to have executed a few ineffective indirect fire attacks in the direction of U.S. or NATO bases, its fighters generally refrained from carrying out major attacks against U.S. or NATO forces, focusing its violence instead on the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).⁴⁰

High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems stage in Kuwait to support the safe and deliberate withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces from Afghanistan (U.S. Army National Guard photo).



About Operation Freedom's Sentinel

MISSION

During this quarter, U.S. forces carried out two complementary missions under Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS): 1) counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K), and their affiliates in Afghanistan; and 2) participation in the NATO-led Resolute Support mission, under which the United States trains, advises, and assists Afghan forces and the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior Affairs to build their institutional capacity. In addition, under OFS authorities, U.S. forces provide combat support, such as aerial strikes and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, to the Afghan security forces as they fight the Taliban and terrorist organizations. The Department of State supports OFS through diplomatic efforts to reach a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan, among other activities.

HISTORY

On October 7, 2001, the United States launched combat operations in Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom to topple the Taliban regime and eliminate al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. The Taliban regime fell quickly, and on May 1, 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced an end to major combat operations in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the United States and international coalition partners transitioned to a mission designed to combat terrorism in Afghanistan while helping the nascent Afghan government to defend itself and build democratic institutions in the country.

While the new Afghan government developed, the Taliban launched increasingly deadly attacks to recapture lost territory, killing more than 800 U.S. Service members and wounding more than 4,200 between the 2003 announcement and a 2009 change in strategy. To combat a resurgent Taliban, the United States increased the number of U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan, surging to a force of 100,000 troops in 2010 and 2011. The U.S. troop increase was initially successful in reestablishing security within much of Afghanistan, but as the United States proceeded with the withdrawal of surge forces, concerns remained about the ability of the Afghan forces to maintain security.

OFS began on January 1, 2015, when the United States formally ended its combat mission, Operation Enduring Freedom, and joined with other nations as part of the NATO Resolute Support Mission. In 2018, the United States increased its diplomatic efforts to reach an accord with the Taliban, culminating in a February 29, 2020, agreement. Under the agreement, the United States committed to reducing its troop levels to 8,600 by July 2020, and to withdraw all military forces of the United States, its allies, and coalition partners from Afghanistan by May 1, 2021. Under the agreement, the Taliban committed to, among other things, prevent any group or individual in Afghanistan (including al-Qaeda) from threatening the security of the United States and its allies. In April 2021, President Biden announced that U.S. troops would not meet the agreed May withdrawal deadline but would begin their final withdrawal in May, with the goal of removing all U.S. military personnel, DoD civilians, and contractors by September 11, 2021.

DOD POSITIONS ASSETS TO COVER WITHDRAWAL AND PROTECT DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE

DoD officials told reporters in April that a contingent consisting of U.S. troops, mostly from the 75th Ranger Regiment, would deploy to Afghanistan to provide security for U.S. forces as they withdraw. This contingent included dedicated transportation aircraft and AC-130 gunships to provide close air support. Additionally, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III authorized the deployment of the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and at least four B-52 Stratofortress bombers to the region to protect retreating U.S. troops from Taliban attacks.⁴¹ In April, DoD spokesperson John Kirby stated, “We have to assume, and we are assuming, that this drawdown could be opposed and resisted by the Taliban.”⁴²

In April, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, told reporters, “We have a lot of work ahead of us to make sure we get out in a good and orderly fashion, protect the force, and continue defending America.”⁴³ U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Commander, General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., concurred with this assessment, stating at an April 30 press conference, “I would advise the Taliban that we will be well prepared to defend ourselves throughout the withdrawal process.”⁴⁴

On June 11, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security Ronald Moultrie testified to Congress that the DoD was in the process of considering the “over-the-horizon” posture that will be necessary to respond rapidly to future challenges that may arise in Afghanistan (see page 19).⁴⁵ Under Secretary Moultrie added that the DoD’s top priority was protecting U.S. personnel during the withdrawal process.⁴⁶

On June 25, the U.S. Navy announced that the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group had joined the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Arabian Sea to provide additional air support to protect U.S. and coalition forces as they withdraw.⁴⁷ According to media reports, jets from the Eisenhower’s fighter wing have routinely flown airstrikes against Taliban forces besieging ANDSF positions. However, targeting for these strikes has been—and will continue to be—limited by the lack of advanced U.S. military communication equipment and human intelligence collection on the ground.⁴⁸

On June 25, the U.S. Navy announced that the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group had joined the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Arabian Sea to provide additional air support to protect U.S. and coalition forces as they withdraw.

SELECTED KEY EVENTS, APRIL 1, 2021–JUNE 30, 2021

APRIL 7

Taliban launches rocket attack against coalition forces at Kandahar Airfield, but no casualties or damage are reported.

APRIL 14

President Biden announces plans to withdraw all U.S. military forces from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021.

MAY 8

An unclaimed car bombing outside a Kabul school kills at least 68 and injures more than 165, mostly female students of the minority Hazara ethnic group.

APR

APRIL 12

The Taliban announces it will not participate in a peace conference planned in Istanbul, Turkey, prompting organizers to postpone the conference indefinitely.

APRIL 27

Department of State orders all nonessential personnel to leave the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

MAY

Former USCENTCOM Commander General Joseph Votel (retired) told reporters that he hoped to see a “more comprehensive plan for what this withdrawal would look like” in order to leave the ANDSF “on the very best footing that we could.”⁴⁹ General Votel contrasted the Afghanistan withdrawal with the 2011 withdrawal from Iraq, which he described as a “much more deliberate approach,” leaving behind a large embassy and security cooperation element.⁵⁰

More details on the U.S. withdrawal of personnel and retrograde of equipment are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AIMS TO ENSURE SECURITY AND SAFE OPERATIONS AT KABUL AIRPORT TO SECURE ACCESS FOR DIPLOMATS AND OTHERS

According to media reporting, the U.S. Government initiated discussions with Turkish leaders in June with the goal of developing a concept of international support, including the presence of some Turkish military forces, for the security and safe operations of Hamid Karzai International Airport after the end of the Resolute Support Mission. U.S. and NATO officials told reporters that continued operation of the airport was necessary to sustain a diplomatic and development presence in Afghanistan.⁵¹

As of the end of this quarter, the coalition had not determined whether keeping an enduring Turkish presence there would be possible or what that might entail. However, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters in June that the U.S. and Turkish governments had made a “clear commitment” to prioritize security at the airport.⁵² According to media reporting, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that his country would require diplomatic, logistical, and financial assistance from the United States if it were to maintain troops in Afghanistan to protect and operate the airport following the withdrawal of other NATO troops.⁵³

DoD spokesperson John Kirby said, “Security at the airport—in whatever form or fashion it takes—will be important, not only for the United States, but for any other nation that

MAY 13

NATO Resolute Support withdraws from Kandahar Airfield, turning the facility over to the ANDSF.

JUNE 20

President Ghani replaces the Ministers of Defense and Interior and the Army Chief of Staff.

JUN

MAY 9

Taliban declares a 3-day ceasefire for the Eid al-Fitr holiday from May 13–15.

JUNE 7

USCENTCOM announces that it has completed more than 50 percent of the withdrawal process.

JUNE 25

President Ghani meets with President Biden in Washington. The U.S. Embassy takes operational control of the former NATO Resolute Support Headquarters facility in Kabul.

likewise plans to maintain a diplomatic presence in Kabul.”⁵⁴ Former NATO commander Admiral James Stavridis (retired) told reporters, “In addition to personal safety and ability to evacuate in emergencies, [helicopters] and planes are needed to move U.S. diplomats, aid workers, intelligence officers, and support personnel around the country... Without that fundamental capability, the mission of the embassy is a failure.”⁵⁵

The Taliban has stated that it opposes a sustained Turkish military presence and that “foreign forces under whatever name or by whichever country in our homeland is unacceptable for the Afghan people and the Islamic Emirate.”⁵⁶

U.S. MILITARY MISSION AFGHANISTAN POST-WITHDRAWAL WILL FOCUS ON PROTECTING THE U.S. EMBASSY

On June 29, DoD spokesperson John Kirby told reporters that the DoD would retain a security force in Afghanistan to protect the U.S. Embassy and possibly Kabul airport after the withdrawal is complete.⁵⁷ Mr. Kirby said, “Afghanistan is not going to be treated like any other nation, where we have... Marine security guards,” noting that the “dynamic nature of the security threat” will necessitate a larger than average embassy security force to support the basic functions of the diplomatic presence.⁵⁸ Mr. Kirby indicated that U.S. troops were guarding the airport as of the end of June, but he was unable to say whether they would continue to play a security role in the future.⁵⁹

On June 29, DoD spokesperson John Kirby told reporters that the DoD would retain a security force in Afghanistan to protect the U.S. Embassy and possibly Kabul airport after the withdrawal is complete.

Taliban Offensive OVERRUNS Dozens of District Centers

Following President Biden’s announcement of the September withdrawal deadline, the Taliban significantly increased its campaign of violence against Afghan government forces and civilians across the country, according to media reports. The Taliban has stated that it believes the September withdrawal deadline to be a violation of the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement.⁶⁰ According to an Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) spokesperson, violent incidents increased by nearly 25 percent around the country since President Biden announced the revised withdrawal deadline, with Taliban attacks reported in 21 of the 34 provinces.⁶¹ Some U.S. commanders have argued that the Taliban has failed to meet the conditions of the agreement by continuing attacks on the Afghan forces and failing to cut ties with al-Qaeda and other extremist groups, according to media reporting.⁶²

When asked about the Taliban’s momentum, General McKenzie said, “the fighting is a seesaw right now.”⁶³ However, the Taliban’s spring offensive has resulted in the Taliban doubling the number of districts it controlled, from 73 on May 1 to 157 on June 29, according to media reports. Most of these districts were previously contested, but at least 10 were controlled by the Afghan government before being taken by the Taliban.⁶⁴

According to media sources, the Taliban expanded its control over these districts through a combination of military offensives, government retreats, and mediation with local officials while pursuing its long-term strategy of gaining influence in rural districts to then apply pressure to the population centers.⁶⁵ Only a small number of districts—possibly as few as 12—were retaken by government forces this quarter. The pattern of defeats and surrenders has hurt the morale of the Afghan troops and led ANDSF commanders to reconsider what territory they can realistically hold following the departure of international forces.⁶⁶

The DIA reported that the ANDSF “very likely will struggle” to defend and hold territory and reverse Taliban advances during the second half of 2021.

According to media reporting, the Taliban conducted a series of attacks near vulnerable provincial capitals during the first week of May, testing the ANDSF for defensive weak points and assessing the Afghan government’s capacity to provide air support as coalition forces withdraw. These attacks were primarily in provinces where the Taliban has had a significant presence for many years, such as Helmand, Zabul, Ghazni, and Logar. While the Taliban has established its hold in rural territory, it has also begun advancing on district centers usually controlled by the Afghan government.⁶⁷

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported that the ANDSF “very likely will struggle” to defend and hold territory and reverse Taliban advances during the second half of 2021. During this quarter, the Afghan forces retook some of the district centers lost to the Taliban, but they have not demonstrated the ability to clear these reclaimed districts of Taliban presence. The ANDSF often leave inadequate forces to secure vulnerable districts from future Taliban assaults. Citing media reporting, the DIA said that the ANDSF often abandon their defensive positions in the face of sustained offenses by the Taliban, forcing the Afghan special operations units and air support to combat Taliban advances.⁶⁸

At a press conference on June 29, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Commander General Austin Miller said, “Civil war is certainly a path that can be visualized if [Afghanistan] continues on the trajectory it’s on.”⁶⁹ General Miller acknowledged the Taliban’s battlefield successes this quarter and told reporters, “What we’re seeing is the rapid loss of district centers.”⁷⁰ He added that he has recommended that the ANDSF pull their security forces back from the field to defend key population centers.⁷¹

More details on Taliban military operations and objectives are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

MAJOR TALIBAN ATTACKS THIS QUARTER

The Taliban’s military campaign escalated significantly during the quarter as it continued making territorial gains. While the Taliban primarily targeted the ANDSF throughout the quarter, many attacks also killed and wounded civilians. In congressional testimony on May 12, then-Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs David Helvey told the House Armed Services Committee that the departure of U.S. and NATO forces creates “new risks for human rights in general in Afghanistan,” if the Taliban is not held accountable.⁷²

On April 26, a rocket struck the compound of Kunar’s provincial governor during a religious ceremony, wounding at least 16 children and 3 Afghan government officials, according to media reporting. The governor of Kunar blamed the Taliban for the attack.⁷³

On April 30, a suicide car bomb in Afghanistan’s eastern Logar province killed at least 30 and injured more than 60 civilians and militia members, Afghan officials told reporters. The explosion took place near the home of a former local government official during an event where guests were breaking their Ramadan fasts. Among the victims were high school students from rural areas who were visiting the provincial capital for their university entrance exams as well as pro-government militia members, according to media reports.

The Afghan government blamed the Taliban for the attack, but the Taliban did not claim responsibility.⁷⁴

According to media reporting, the Taliban attacked and seized an ANA base in Ghazni city on May 1, capturing dozens of soldiers and killing several others. According to media reports, the fighting lasted several hours and killed at least 17 soldiers with 25 others reported missing. A Taliban spokesman claimed that the group's fighters had captured the missing soldiers and seized heavy and light weaponry.⁷⁵ Several days later, local officials told reporters that the ANDSF had restored the situation in Ghazni, but the ANA base remained under Taliban control.⁷⁶

On May 5, the Taliban overran Burka district in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province. Local officials told reporters that large areas of the district had been under Taliban control for years, but the insurgents had not previously controlled its city center. An Afghan National Police (ANP) spokesperson said that security forces had "tactically" withdrawn from the district, but efforts were underway to retake it. The Taliban said that its fighters seized a large amount of munitions and equipment from the retreating Afghan security forces. One day earlier, the Taliban attacked an ANA base in another district of Baghlan province, killing at least nine soldiers, according to media reports.⁷⁷ On May 7, the ANDSF deployed special operations forces and a joint force of army and police units to Baghlan province. A Taliban spokesman said that the entire region was under insurgent control, though the ANDSF claimed they had inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban.⁷⁸

In mid-May, local Afghan officials told reporters that the Taliban overran and gained control of Nirkh district in Wardak province. Nirkh district is approximately 75 miles southwest of Kabul and is situated along the central highway that links the capital to southern Kandahar province, a Taliban stronghold. A Taliban spokesman stated that the insurgent group seized the district, killing and capturing ANDSF personnel and seizing a large cache of weapons, ammunition, and military equipment. Afghan officials told reporters that the Taliban have used the provinces neighboring Kabul as staging grounds for hit-and-run attacks and suicide bombings on the capital.⁷⁹

On June 20, local Afghan officials told reporters that the Taliban had entered two provincial capitals in northern Afghanistan, Kunduz city, the capital of Kunduz province, and Maimana, the capital of Faryab province. In both cities, the Taliban's fighters seized the city's entrance and then moved into surrounding neighborhoods, clashing with security forces along the way.⁸⁰

DIA: TALIBAN SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A TALIBAN-LED ISLAMIC EMIRATE

The DIA reported that the Taliban has expanded its influence across Afghanistan after the withdrawal of coalition forces. Following the U.S. withdrawal, the Taliban will probably increase its use of large-scale military operations throughout the country as it grows more confident in its ability to defeat the Afghan government militarily. The DIA reported that the Taliban's strategy will likely focus on overrunning key provincial capitals to set the stage for a military takeover of Kabul. A reduction in U.S. offensive operations, specifically airstrikes and raids, has likely provided the Taliban greater freedom of movement and enabled it to broaden the scope of its military operations and make widespread territorial gains, according to the DIA.⁸¹

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The DIA reported that the Taliban seeks to replace the Afghan government with a Taliban-led Islamic Emirate.

The DIA reported that the Taliban seeks to replace the Afghan government with a Taliban-led Islamic Emirate.⁸² This year, the Taliban has overrun district centers, surrounded provincial centers, and captured key supply routes to cut off Kabul from neighboring provinces. According to the DIA, the Taliban is prepared to increase its military operations in the absence of a political settlement.⁸³

Additional details on Taliban military operations and objectives are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

TALIBAN CONDUCTED LIMITED ATTACKS ON COALITION BASES CAUSED NO COALITION CASUALTIES

According to media reports, the Taliban fired rockets toward a coalition military base in Khost province in the early morning of April 2. The rockets missed the base but hit a nearby village. Additionally, the Taliban fired rockets at an airport in Khost where U.S. troops were based. U.S. forces responded by conducting clearing operations in the vicinity of the base.⁸⁴

On April 7, the Taliban launched another rocket attack, this time against Kandahar air base, where several hundred U.S. troops were still based at the time, but again the rockets landed outside the base perimeter. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby condemned the attack and the Taliban's escalation of violence, but he declined to say whether this attack constituted a violation of the U.S.-Taliban agreement. He said only, "while the attack resulted in no casualties or damage, the Taliban's decision to provoke even more violence in Afghanistan remains disruptive to the opportunity for peace presented by ongoing negotiations."⁸⁵

According to media reporting, an explosion inside Bagram Airfield on May 1 killed 1 and wounded 24 Afghan personnel.⁸⁶ The DIA, citing media reporting, said that the Taliban launched two rocket attacks against coalition forces at Kandahar Airfield on May 2, but they were ineffective.⁸⁷

On May 3, DoD spokesperson John Kirby told reporters that "small, harassing attacks" in Afghanistan over the past several days had not had a significant impact on the U.S. military's withdrawal from the country.⁸⁸

TALIBAN CONTINUES ATTACKS AFTER GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR RAMADAN CEASEFIRE, BUT OBSERVES 3 DAYS OF PEACE FOR EID AL-FITR

In mid-April, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani publicly called for a ceasefire during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In a press statement marking the start of Ramadan, Ghani said, "Once again, I am calling on the Taliban to stop fighting, enmity, and observe permanent ceasefire which is the demand of the people of Afghanistan."⁸⁹

Despite the Afghan government's call for peace, the Taliban kept up its campaign of violence. According to media reporting, Taliban attacks killed approximately 120 ANDSF personnel and 65 civilians during the last 2 weeks of April leading up to the May 1 deadline for withdrawal of foreign troops originally agreed to in the U.S.-Taliban agreement.⁹⁰

Senior Afghan officials told reporters that the Taliban's actions were a show of force, as the insurgents seek to gain territory as foreign forces withdraw. An Afghan Ministry of Interior



A U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle takes off from al-Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, in support of drawdown operations. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Affairs (MoI) spokesperson said that the Taliban carried out at least 6 suicide bombings, several targeted killings, and planted 65 roadside bombs targeting government troops during the second half of April. Dozens of Taliban fighters, including several commanders, were also killed during this heightened fighting.⁹¹

Following increased violence during much of Ramadan, the Taliban declared a 3-day ceasefire for the Eid al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of Ramadan. According to media reports, the Taliban released a statement on May 9 saying, “Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate are instructed to halt all offensive operations against the enemy countrywide from the first till the third day of Eid,” but added the caveat that fighters should be prepared to respond with violence against any Afghan government attacks during that period.⁹² The Afghan government quickly responded by ordering its forces to halt all offensive operations against the insurgents during the 3-day period.⁹³

Although the media reported that the Taliban and ANDSF did not directly engage one another during the temporary ceasefire, 4 separate roadside bombs killed at least 11 civilians and wounded 13 on the first day of the ceasefire.⁹⁴ Immediately after the ceasefire, fighting between the Taliban and ANDSF resumed in Helmand province, with clashes and attacks on security checkpoints on the outskirts of provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, according to media sources.⁹⁵ Additionally, ISIS-K claimed responsibility for a bombing at a mosque on the outskirts of Kabul killed at least 12 people and wounded 15 during an Eid al-Fitr prayer service during a ceasefire. The Taliban condemned the attack.⁹⁶

Offensive ANDSF operations following the ceasefire focused on the areas around Lashkar Gah and Baghlan, both provincial capital cities that had been the scenes of heavy fighting

In May, the Taliban warned neighboring countries against allowing their territory to be used as a staging area for U.S. forces, stating that “it will be a great historic mistake and disgrace, its shame will go in history.”

before the ceasefire. An MoD spokesperson claimed that operations had killed 34 insurgents near Lashkar Gah and 25 in Baghlan. Additionally, the ANDSF fought to recapture the Taliban-held Nirkh district in Maidan Wardak province, less than 75 miles southwest of Kabul, according to media reporting.⁹⁷

LOCAL CEASEFIRE IS SHORT-LIVED

In May, tribal elders in Alingar district in Afghanistan’s eastern Laghman province announced a month-long local ceasefire between the Taliban and the Afghan government forces to allow farmers to harvest their wheat crops, according to media reporting. The declaration was signed by local officials from both the Taliban and the Afghan government. Fighting temporarily stopped in Alingar, despite heavy clashes elsewhere in the province.⁹⁸ However, 3 days later, a tribal elder declared that the Taliban violated the ceasefire as militants carried out renewed attacks in the district.⁹⁹

TALIBAN ISSUES WARNINGS AND THREATS

On May 5, the Taliban stated that Afghan journalists will “face the consequences” if the Taliban perceives that they are siding with the Afghan government.¹⁰⁰ Reporters are increasingly targets of violence in Afghanistan. As many as 76 reporters have been killed since 2006, 15 of whom were killed in the last year, according to media reports. The Afghan government blames the Taliban for many of these murders, although ISIS-K has claimed responsibility for several.¹⁰¹ Several Afghan reporters indicated that they feared for their livelihoods if the Taliban returns to power.¹⁰²

In May, the Taliban warned neighboring countries against allowing their territory to be used as a staging area for U.S. forces, stating that “it will be a great historic mistake and disgrace, its shame will go in history.”¹⁰³ The Taliban added, “As we have repeatedly assured others our soil will not be used against anyone’s security, we urge others not to use its soil and airspace against our country.”¹⁰⁴

In June, the Taliban made a public statement offering potential clemency to interpreters and other Afghans who have previously supported U.S. and coalition forces, but added that such individuals “should show remorse for their past actions and must not engage in such activities in the future that amount to treason against Islam and their country.”¹⁰⁵ However, many of these individuals do not trust the Taliban and continue to fear for their lives if they remain in Afghanistan after coalition troops withdraw (see page 31).¹⁰⁶

ISIS-K INCREASES VIOLENCE AMID AFGHAN INSTABILITY

According to the DIA, ISIS-K is taking advantage of the political instability and violence in Afghanistan by using the opportunity to bolster its public support and recruitment efforts. This quarter, ISIS-K attacked minority sectarian targets and infrastructure to spread fear and highlight the Afghan government’s weakness. The attacks have increased ISIS-K’s public visibility and will help bolster its recruitment of disenfranchised Taliban members and other “educated extremists,” according to the DIA.¹⁰⁷

In May, ISIS-K conducted a high-profile attack on a Sufi mosque and escalated its attacks on the Afghan government. According to the DIA, ISIS-K claimed credit for the destruction

of nine electrical pylons and five fuel tankers, targeting infrastructure as part of a campaign of economic warfare. Additionally, ISIS-K targeted Shia bus passengers in Kabul and Parwan province, destroying 6 buses and resulting in approximately 64 casualties.¹⁰⁸

Additional details on ISIS-K are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

ATTACK ON HAZARA GIRLS SCHOOL KILLS 68, MOSTLY YOUNG STUDENTS

On May 8, explosions outside a Hazara school for girls in Kabul killed at least 68 people and wounded more than 165, mostly young female students.¹⁰⁹ The Afghan government, including Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, blamed the Taliban for the bombing, but the Taliban denied any involvement and condemned the killings.¹¹⁰ The DIA said that ISIS-K was likely responsible for the attack.¹¹¹ The attack began when a suicide bomber detonated a car full of explosives at the school's gate. As the students fled in panic, two additional bombs exploded.¹¹² Media reports indicated this was the deadliest single attack in Afghanistan in more than a year.¹¹³

The Hazara are a Shia ethnic minority who are often victims of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, according to media reports. Other recent attacks against the Hazara community include a March 2020 bombing that killed 32; a May 2020 shooting of a maternity clinic that killed 24 mothers, newborns, and a medical professional; and an October 2020 bombing at an educational center that killed 40 and wounded 70.¹¹⁴

TALIBAN CONTINUES TO SUPPORT AL-QAEDA AMID U.S. WITHDRAWAL

This quarter, the DIA reported no change in the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda, with both groups seeking the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. As in previous quarters, al-Qaeda provided nominal military training and support to the Taliban without directly claiming credit for attacks, and the Taliban continued to provide safe haven for al-Qaeda fighters despite publicly denying the terrorist group's presence in Afghanistan.¹¹⁵

According to the DIA, the Taliban will “very likely” continue to ask al-Qaeda to restrict its activities and obfuscate the longstanding relationship between the groups until U.S. and coalition troops complete their withdrawal.¹¹⁶ Senior Taliban leaders publicly claim that there are no al-Qaeda members in Afghanistan and insist that the Taliban is fully committed to its obligations under the U.S.-Taliban agreement. The DIA reported that the Taliban's willingness to stringently enforce restrictions on al-Qaeda will likely decrease following the withdrawal, provided al-Qaeda's activities do not prompt another foreign military intervention in Afghanistan. However, the DIA added that the compartmented nature of al-Qaeda's command and control structure will likely make it difficult for the Taliban to monitor and curtail their activities effectively in the future.¹¹⁷

When asked in a Senate hearing about the likelihood of al-Qaeda or ISIS regenerating inside Afghanistan and presenting a threat to the U.S. homeland, Secretary Austin said, “I would assess it as medium. I would also say...that it would take possibly 2 years for them to develop that capability.”¹¹⁸ General Milley concurred with Secretary Austin's assessment, and added that “if there was a collapse of the government or disillusion of the Afghan

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In a June interview, General McKenzie also acknowledged that both al-Qaeda and ISIS-K aspire to attack the U.S. homeland and European allies, and without active counterterrorism pressure, they could likely reconstitute to the point of being able to operate outside of the region.

security force, that risk would obviously increase. But, right now, I'd say medium and in about 2 years or so."¹¹⁹

In a June interview, General McKenzie also acknowledged that both al-Qaeda and ISIS-K aspire to attack the U.S. homeland and European allies, and without active counterterrorism pressure, they could likely reconstitute to the point of being able to operate outside of the region. General McKenzie stated that if "left unmolested [al-Qaeda] are certainly going to rebuild, re-strengthen themselves, and we have no reason to doubt they...want to attack us in our homeland."¹²⁰

DIA Director Lieutenant General Scott Berrier said in April that al-Qaeda had fewer than 200 members in South Asia (both within and outside Afghanistan) and that "there was little discernible activity out of the group" recently. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad testified to Congress that there will be "some degradation" of the U.S. ability "to know exactly what's going on," but that "right now...we would get adequate warning" of threats.¹²¹

Additional details on Taliban ties to al-Qaeda are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

DoD Plans to Provide "Over-the-Horizon" Support to the ANDSF

FUTURE PLANS FOR SUPPORT EFFORTS MAY INCLUDE AIRSTRIKES AGAINST TERRORISTS BUT NOT IN DEFENSE OF THE ANDSF

According to an Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) official, the DoD plans to continue providing financial security assistance to the ANDSF, contracted maintenance and training for aviation units, delivery of supplies such as fuel and ammunition, and pay for Afghan soldiers' salaries.¹²²

DoD spokesperson John Kirby told reporters in April that U.S. forces will not conduct airstrikes in defense of the ANDSF or supporting ANDSF offensive operations against the Taliban after the withdrawal is complete. He said that the U.S. Government will continue its financial support, especially for contracted maintenance of aviation units. "The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces must be ready to assume the responsibility to defend their citizens and their country. Our support to the Afghan...forces will be primarily financially based, and certainly again we're looking at how we can continue to support in a responsible way some of their contractual requirements for things like aviation maintenance," Mr. Kirby said.¹²³

USCENTCOM Commander, General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., concurred with Mr. Kirby's statement, telling reporters that the U.S. military would not conduct airstrikes in support of the ANDSF. He said that any post-withdrawal airstrikes would be focused against terrorists if the DoD has reason to believe "we've uncovered someone who wants to attack the homeland of the United States [or] one of our allies and partners."¹²⁴ General McKenzie acknowledged the difficulties associated with conducting over-the-horizon operations,

An EA-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft prepares to launch from the flight deck of aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. (U.S. Navy photo)



as aircraft will need to travel from bases thousands of miles away to conduct surveillance against terrorists in Afghanistan.¹²⁵

According to General McKenzie, the DoD will continue to provide security assistance to the ANDSF, but the Afghan forces will have to stand on their own against the Taliban. He emphasized that over-the-horizon airstrikes will focus on keeping “pressure on ISIS and al-Qaeda,” not the Taliban.¹²⁶ He added that top-level policy about whether and to what extent U.S. military forces could conduct strikes in defense of the ANDSF had not yet been finalized.¹²⁷

Following the withdrawal of U.S. military forces, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul will be the main platform in Afghanistan for U.S. support for the Afghan government. The DoS stated that it coordinated with the DoD and other U.S. Government agencies this quarter to ensure that the Afghan forces continue to receive assistance.¹²⁸ Subsequent to the military withdrawal, the U.S. Government intends to use its full diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian toolkit to promote the rights of minorities and women, fight corruption, and support the peace process, according to the DoS.¹²⁹ The DoS reported that all the agencies and diplomatic functions present at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul are planning to remain intact after military forces withdraw from Afghanistan.¹³⁰

GENERALS RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS OF POST-WITHDRAWAL INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

In testimony to Congress, DIA Director Lieutenant General Scott Berrier stated that the DIA has built a robust human intelligence network in Afghanistan throughout the past two decades. As the U.S. has reduced its troop presence and consolidated bases, those intelligence operations have also reduced. According to General Berrier, the last collection platform available on the ground will ultimately be the defense attaché personnel at the embassy. General Berrier said the DIA would attempt to manage human intelligence collection from locations outside of Afghanistan but did not provide details on how it would be accomplished.¹³¹

Responding to a question about the possibility of reducing the number of defense attaché personnel in Afghanistan, General Berrier stated that he was committed to maintaining the current attaché presence in country. He added that this presence provides the DIA with access and influence.¹³²

The National Security Agency Director, General Paul Nakasone, added that intelligence collection in Afghanistan will be very different after the military withdrawal is complete. According to General Nakasone, his agency would continue its work from locations outside of Afghanistan and will leverage the collection capabilities of USCENTCOM, the U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Government agencies, and partner nations to mitigate the loss of sources on the ground.¹³³

STATUS OF THE ANDSF

Support to the ANDSF Transitions to Over-the-Horizon Model

USFOR-A, Resolute Support, and Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) have been reducing their presence in country since President Biden issued the order for U.S. forces to begin their withdrawal from Afghanistan, according to USFOR-A.¹³⁴ As of the end of the quarter, CSTC-A reported that it was predominately operating from over-the-horizon locations. The Resolute Support mission closed its Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) Commands and ceased all TAA missions at the corps level and below. TAA at the MoD and MoI levels was significantly reduced with the closure of the Ministerial Advisory Groups. CSTC-A said that staffing reductions impeded its ability to respond to the DoD OIG’s quarterly inquiries, and its modified posture made it increasingly difficult to obtain relevant information in support of said inquiries.¹³⁵

According to CSTC-A, the transition of security assistance to locations outside Afghanistan will present both advantages and disadvantages to advisors. Most security assistance personnel will no longer be required to travel to Afghanistan, which will allow for longer periods of transition between incumbents and their replacements in turning over responsibilities. In Afghanistan, transition traditionally took place over 2 to 3 days, but that has since been increased to a 7 to 10 days at locations outside Afghanistan. According to CSTC-A, virtual engagements have increased, but they are not as effective as face-to-face meetings.¹³⁶

In June, the DoD established the Defense Security Cooperation Management Office–Afghanistan (DSCMO-A), which will assume responsibility for providing security assistance support to the ANDSF. According to CSTC-A, this will consist largely of videoconference meetings between U.S. and Afghan senior leaders, as well as lower-level officials. Interactions will focus largely on sustained pay, maintenance, logistics, and the provision of U.S. military equipment.¹³⁷

CSTC-A reported that it plans to mitigate the impact of withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces by increasing its daily video and telephone communication with Afghan partners to address and resolve emerging challenges. CSTC-A said that it established weekly meetings with MoD and MoI leadership to address ministerial-level issues.¹³⁸

CSTC-A reported that it provided limited over-the-horizon support to the ANDSF this quarter, since most of the command's activity was focused on the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces and equipment. This quarter, CSTC-A reported that it focused on reassessing existing contracts that will either be terminated or modified for over-the-horizon support (see page 48).¹³⁹

CSTC-A reported that its Security Assistance Office has executed its mission from locations outside Afghanistan since January 2021, while maintaining a small forward team in Kabul. During this time, the office has refined its duties to focus on Foreign Military Sales case management, management of Afghan troop participation in U.S.-sponsored training, tracking the delivery of U.S.-provided materiel, and end use monitoring.¹⁴⁰ CSTC-A reported shifting to an over-the-horizon posture has not impacted its effectiveness in these areas, given the fact that many of their duties do not require a physical presence. The Security Assistance Office forward team in Kabul performs tasks that require a physical presence, such as transfer of Foreign Military Sales arms, ammunition, and explosives, and contract oversight of Foreign Military Sales logistics. This office is co-located with the U.S. Embassy and will remain at its existing personnel level.¹⁴¹

CSTC-A reported that its engineering component transitioned ongoing projects and responsibilities to DSCMO-A, including the management of 39 ongoing U.S.-funded ANDSF construction projects executed through DoD contracts. Additionally, DSCMO-A provided support at 55 ANDSF facilities across Afghanistan, including contracted emergency repairs of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, water treatment, wastewater treatment, and electric generator systems. DSCMO-A also provides oversight of Afghan government contracts for construction and operations funded through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund.¹⁴²

The Counter Corruption Advisory Group began providing over-the-horizon support for the ANDSF this quarter, and this organization plans to reorganize as part of DSCMO-A, according to CSTC-A.¹⁴³ This support includes providing analysis, case information and data, investigative support, and other recommendations to support good governance and the rule of law.¹⁴⁴

DIA: ANA Cannot Carry Out Mission Without ANASOC and AAF Support

The DIA stated that the ANA likely lacks the capability to carry out its missions without coalition support and remains heavily reliant on support from the ANA Special Operations Command (ANASOC) and the Afghan Air Force (AAF). These special operations and aviation units are the ANDSF's primary offensive elements, and they continue to be overextended and misused by ANA corps commanders, according to the DIA. Since at least October 2017, the ANA has increased its reliance on ANASOC to assist in conventional force functions, such as clearing and holding territory. The DIA cited media reporting indicating that the ANA has been unable to respond effectively to Taliban assaults in rural areas or large-scale assaults against district centers, demonstrating that the ANA is unable to defend large portions of the country independently without coalition support.¹⁴⁵

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This quarter, OUSD(P) reported that training previously conducted in Afghanistan will either be conducted in third-country locations or via videoconference.

Afghan Air Force Is Stretched Thin Supporting Ground Operations

U.S. AVIATION ADVISORS SHIFT TO LOCATIONS OUTSIDE AFGHANISTAN

Train, Advise, and Assist Command—Air (TAAC-Air)—the training command for the AAF, upon which the ANA depends heavily—reported that it will become the Aviation Division within DSCMO-A as support efforts shift locations outside of Afghanistan. The Aviation Division will be responsible for all aviation-related equipment, supplies, maintenance, and training in support of both AAF and Special Mission Wing, the aviation component of the Afghan special operations forces.¹⁴⁶ The Aviation Division will conduct oversight for contracted logistics support (CLS) and contract training programs to ensure they are fulfilling requirements and will make recommendations to the DSCMO-A Director for contract modifications and terminations based on evaluations of contractor performance. Mentorship will continue through a combination of in-person training outside Afghanistan and tele-maintenance and from DSCMO-A headquarters and the regional maintenance hub, located in al-Ain, United Arab Emirates.¹⁴⁷

The DoD has previously reported to the DoD OIG that contractors perform the majority of the work on AAF aircraft.¹⁴⁸ According to TAAC-Air, CLS personnel received withdrawal orders during the quarter, which resulted in contractors transferring equipment and supplies to the AAF.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, the role of CLS shifted to focus more on mentorship and less on actual “wrench-turning maintenance,” according to TAAC-Air.¹⁵⁰

This quarter, OUSD(P) reported that training previously conducted in Afghanistan will either be conducted in third-country locations or via videoconference. Pilot training conducted outside Afghanistan includes mission qualification training for all types and models of aircraft, pilot-in-command qualifications, maintenance test pilot training, and mission systems officer training.¹⁵¹

According to OUSD(P), advisors will use videoconference training to support the Afghan Maintenance Training Center in Kabul. Instructors will provide videoconference training to Afghan maintainers who require on-the-job training as they perform maintenance. Contracted maintenance mentors will provide live videoconference assistance to Afghan maintainers as they work on the aircraft. Many of these contracted maintenance mentors have been operating via video conferencing since the COVID-19 outbreak began, facilitating the transition to over-the-horizon support, according to OUSD(P). CLS maintainers provide maintenance when tasks exceed Afghan maintainers’ current proficiency levels, such as heavy repair, phase maintenance, and engine and transmission replacement. On some occasions, aircraft requiring repair or maintenance are ferried or transported to and from third country locations.¹⁵²

In May and June, four AAF helicopters were lost during operations.¹⁵³ One MD-530 crashed during a period of low visibility near Kandahar Airfield, a hard landing damaged a UH-60 at Kandahar Airfield, and a Special Mission Wing Mi-17 crashed in Wardak province. The causes of these three incidents were unknown as of the end of the quarter. Additionally, one UH-60 was destroyed by enemy fire while refueling at a forward operating location in Ghazni province.¹⁵⁴

AAF AIRCRAFT ARE NOT RECEIVING REQUIRED MAINTENANCE BECAUSE OF HEAVY FIGHTING

TAAC-Air reported that the overuse of AAF aircraft continued during the quarter across all platforms due to the heightened operations tempo.¹⁵⁵ Increased demand for close air support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions; and aerial resupply missions limited the time available for training and increased maintenance requirements.¹⁵⁶

TAAC-Air reported that it has worked with the AAF and CLS to develop a sustainable flight-hour plan that reflects the new limitations and challenges of CLS withdrawal from Afghanistan.¹⁵⁷ TAAC-Air recommended a 50-percent decrease in flying hours and sorties per month for each aircraft, to allow time for maintenance. However, it is unlikely the AAF will be able to reduce its operational tempo.¹⁵⁸ TAAC-Air reported that air crews remained overtasked due to the security situation in Afghanistan. The demand on these crews has increased as the fighting has intensified.¹⁵⁹

Throughout the quarter, all aircraft exceeded CLS's maintenance recommendation intervals by at least 25 percent.¹⁶⁰ This overuse of aircraft is exacerbating existing supply-chain issues as the withdrawal continues, and scheduled maintenance and battle-damage repair is backlogged for aircraft due to the increased operations tempo.¹⁶¹ Overuse of the AAF aircraft—and the corresponding increase in necessary inspections and repairs—has also impeded CLS's ability to provide training and mentoring services.¹⁶² As a result, the CLS responsible for maintaining UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters has temporarily shifted primary focus to fleet health and aircraft maintenance in an attempt to increase aircraft availability.¹⁶³

According to media reporting, the Taliban's ongoing campaign has increasingly denied Afghan security forces the use of roads, requiring a greater share of logistical support to ANA and ANP positions to be conducted by air, including ammunition, food, medical evacuations, and personnel rotation. As a result of the operational tempo, pilots are exceeding the maximum number of hours they are typically allowed to fly.¹⁶⁴

According to TAAC-Air, the UH-60 fleet is being used for its intended purpose and meeting the operational needs of the AAF while heavily supported by CLS. However, while data on usage rates were not available this quarter, TAAC-Air reported that the UH-60 fleet experienced an increase in battle damage and accidents attributed to the summer fighting season.¹⁶⁵ In addition, the withdrawal of U.S. forces and CLS personnel previously assigned to Kandahar Airfield and Mazar-e-Sharif has resulted in the consolidation of almost all in-country aircraft repair capacity—which was previously performed in several locations across Afghanistan—in Kabul.¹⁶⁶ An ANA officer in charge of UH-60 operations told reporters, “We don't know when the contractors are going to leave here. When they do, it'll be very bad.”¹⁶⁷

Last quarter, OUSD(P) reported that the cancellation of an initiative that would have provided CH-47 Chinook helicopters to the Special Mission Wing would result in a vertical lift capabilities gap. In an attempt to partially mitigate this gap, the Afghanistan Resources Oversight Council approved a plan for donor-nation-funded overhauls of 21 Mi-17 helicopters that are currently not able to fly missions, which will provide the Special Mission Wing with medium lift capabilities.¹⁶⁸ OUSD(P) said the DoD will be able to provide contract and program management support for these overhauls.¹⁶⁹

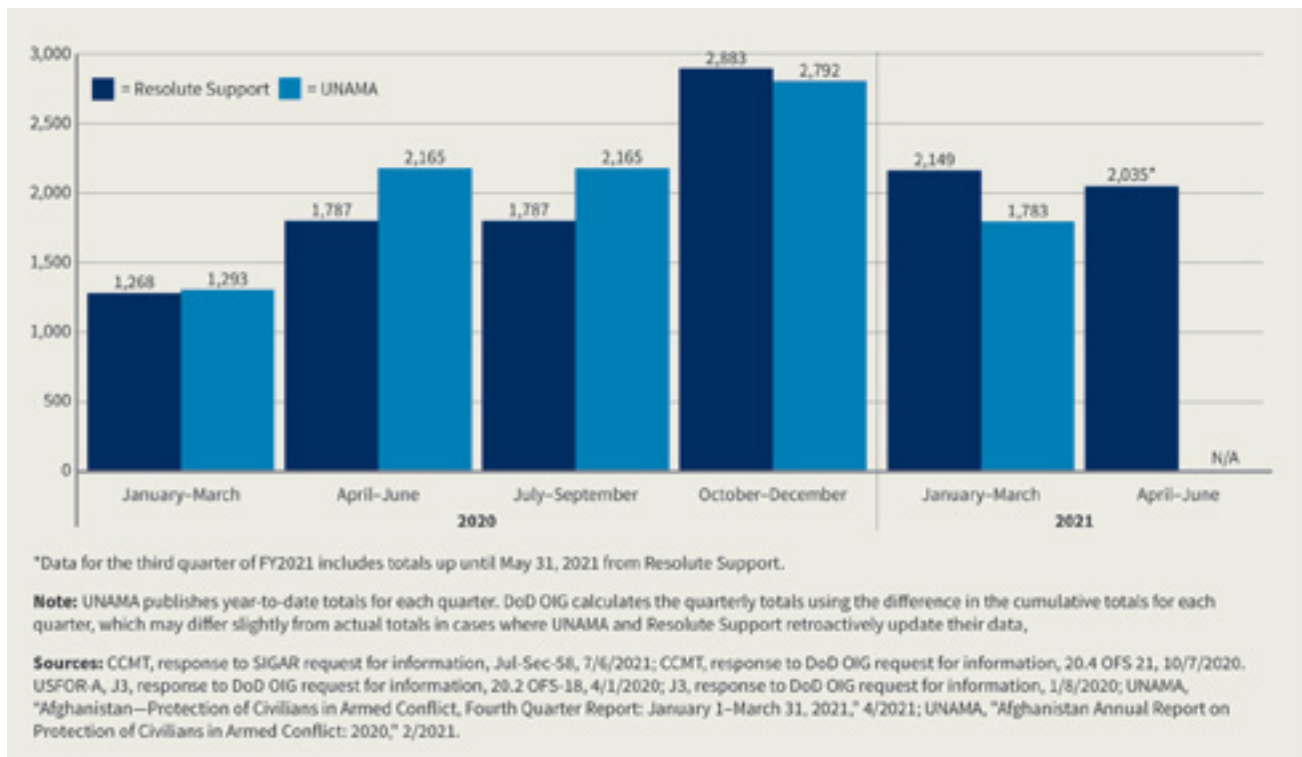
Civilian Casualties Increase amid Taliban Offensive

This quarter, Resolute Support reported that limited data relating to civilian casualties are available due to the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and only provided the DoD OIG with data pertaining to incidents that occurred on or before May 31.¹⁷⁰ The total number of civilian casualties reported during the first 2 months of this quarter was only slightly lower than the number of casualties reported during the entire previous quarter. According to Resolute Support, the total number of casualties in April and May caused by any individual or organization was 2,035 (643 killed and 1,392 wounded), compared to 2,149 (673 killed and 1,476 wounded) in all of last quarter.¹⁷¹ (See Figure 1.) Although the data provided this quarter cover only 2 months, the total casualties represent a 14-percent increase in civilian casualties from the same quarter last year (1,787).¹⁷² The provinces with the greatest number of civilian casualties were Kabul (326), Kandahar (200), and Nangarhar (185).¹⁷³ The majority of civilian casualties were from improvised explosive device (1,127), direct fire (523), and indirect fire (180) attacks, followed by assassinations and criminal incidents (168).¹⁷⁴

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also records civilian casualty data and issues quarterly reports. Resolute Support and UNAMA often report similar trends, but their calculations tend to differ. The discrepancies are due in large part to differences in methodology. Resolute Support assessed reports of civilian casualties

Figure 1.

Civilian Casualties by Reporting Organization, January 2020–May 2021



using ANDSF and coalition operational reports, aircraft video footage, records of U.S. and Afghan weapons releases, and other coalition and Afghan government-generated information.¹⁷⁵ UNAMA investigates reports of civilian casualties using victim and witness accounts, statements from medical personnel, and statements from Afghan officials. UNAMA also requires at least three sources to consider a civilian casualty “verified.”¹⁷⁶

UNAMA recorded 2,392 civilian casualties between May 1 and June 30.¹⁷⁷ The number of civilian casualties in May and June 2021 was nearly as many as were documented in the entire 4 preceding months. The 2-month civilian casualty tally was the highest recorded for May and June since UNAMA began gathering data in 2009.¹⁷⁸

The first half of 2021 saw a dramatic increase in civilian casualties resulting from improvised explosive devices.¹⁷⁹ Civilian casualties from ground engagements between the Taliban and ANDSF also increased significantly during the first half of 2021. Airstrikes—most of which were conducted by the Afghan Air Force—resulted in increases in civilian casualties. Targeted killings by the Taliban and terrorist groups continued at similarly high rates, according to UNAMA.¹⁸⁰

According to USFOR-A, 32 (23 killed and 9 wounded) civilian casualties were attributed to the AAF this quarter.¹⁸¹ USFOR-A collects information relating to AAF-attributed civilian casualties from multiple sources, including operational reporting, media, social media, Afghan government self-reporting, and UNAMA. USFOR-A does not independently verify these reports. USFOR-A reported no civilian casualties from the 127 airstrikes carried out by U.S. forces during the quarter.¹⁸² According to USFOR-A, U.S. airstrikes continued at rates similar to the previous quarter. The U.S. airstrikes that occurred throughout the quarter consisted solely of defensive strikes in support of Afghan forces, according to USFOR-A.¹⁸³

Further details of U.S. unilateral operations are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

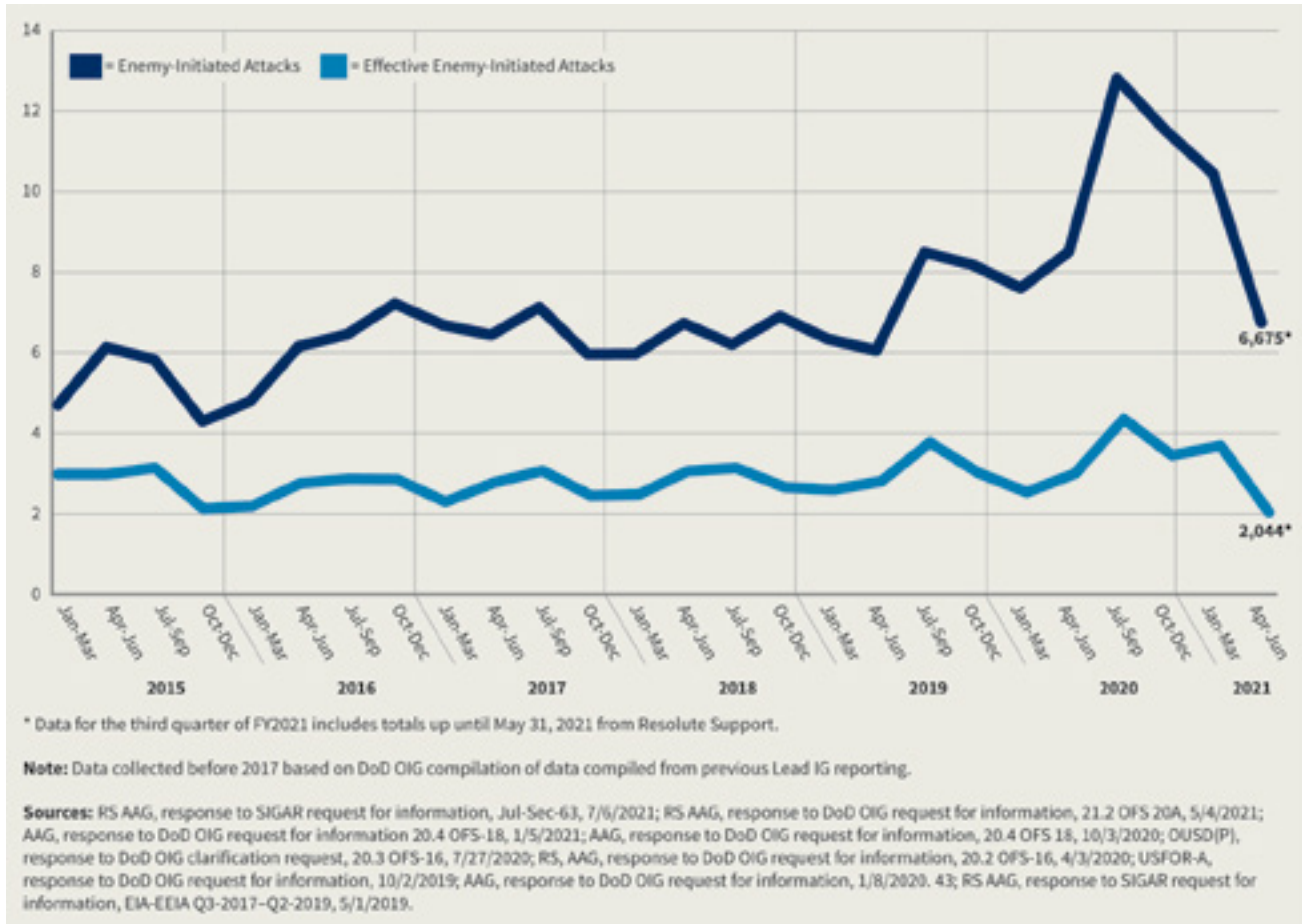
Enemy-Initiated Attacks Continue to Increase

During the quarter the Resolute Support mission only released partial data relating to enemy-initiated attacks against the ANDSF. Data collection efforts reportedly ceased as a result of the U.S. withdrawal. The Lead IG has traditionally utilized this data—in combination with other information—to gauge the level of conflict in Afghanistan. Resolute Support stated that the data will no longer be provided unless USCENTCOM assumes collection duties.¹⁸⁴

Resolute Support reported that 6,765 enemy-initiated attacks occurred from April to May, compared to 6,851 in the first 2 months of last quarter. The total number of enemy-initiated attacks last quarter eventually reached 10,469.¹⁸⁵ In comparison, there were 8,505 enemy initiated attacks during the same period last year.¹⁸⁶ Of the enemy-initiated attacks this quarter, 2,044 were deemed “effective” (resulting in casualties), compared to 2,478 reported in the first 2 months of last quarter.¹⁸⁷ A majority of the effective enemy-initiated attacks resulted from direct fire.¹⁸⁸ The provinces with the highest total of both enemy-initiated attacks and effective enemy-initiated attacks during the quarter were Herat, Kandahar, and Balkh.¹⁸⁹

The first half of 2021 saw a dramatic increase in civilian casualties resulting from improvised explosive devices.

Figure 2.

Enemy-Initiated Attacks, January 2015–June 2021, in Thousands

As reported last quarter, enemy-initiated attacks in the first and second quarters of FY 2021 remained above 10,000.¹⁹⁰ Partial data reported by Resolute Support suggests a continuation of this trend. As shown in Figure 2, enemy-initiated attacks since the fourth quarter of FY 2020 have been at the highest levels since OFS began in January 2015 and suggest that the Taliban intensified attacks against the ANDSF since the signing of the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement.

DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Taliban Refuse to Participate in Proposed Istanbul Peace Conference

The Taliban refused to participate in the Istanbul Peace Conference for Afghanistan jointly planned by the United Nations, Turkey, and Qatar.¹⁹¹ The United States advocated for the conference, hoping it might accelerate the stalled Afghan peace negotiations that



Secretary of State Blinken speaks at a meet and greet with U.S. Mission Afghanistan personnel in Kabul. (DoS photo)

were underway in Doha, Qatar.¹⁹² The conference was scheduled to begin on April 24, but on April 20, Turkish government officials informed media representatives that it would be postponed because the Taliban refused to attend.¹⁹³ The Turkish government later announced that the conference would take place after Ramadan (April 12–May 12), but no date had been set as of the end of the quarter.¹⁹⁴

In a joint statement on April 23, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan called on the Taliban to “reaffirm their commitment for achieving an inclusive negotiated settlement leading to lasting peace in Afghanistan.”¹⁹⁵ In May, the Taliban announced that it would attend a peace conference in Istanbul as long as the conference did not last more than 3 days, the agenda did not include decisions on critical issues, and the Taliban delegation consisted of low-level representatives.¹⁹⁶

Afghan Peace Talks Make Little Progress

During the quarter, negotiating teams from the Afghan Islamic Republic and the Taliban met to discuss technical issues related to the peace talks.¹⁹⁷ According to Afghan media reporting, the negotiating teams held two meetings to discuss the possibility of holding future meetings.¹⁹⁸ In June, the European Union’s Special Envoy for Afghanistan told reporters that little or no substantive progress has been made.¹⁹⁹ A member of the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team echoed the sentiment in June, stating to the media that no serious or meaningful process had yet begun.²⁰⁰

The DoS stated that the Taliban and the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating teams continue to engage one another in Doha. According to the DoS, the Taliban seeks international legitimacy and assistance, as well as the removal of U.S. and UN sanctions, and will thus continue to engage in the peace process.²⁰¹

President Ghani stated that he respects the U.S. decision to withdraw military forces and that he considers the military withdrawal a turning point for Afghanistan and its neighbors.

U.S. Allies and Afghanistan’s Neighbors React to Withdrawal Announcement

President Ghani stated that he respects the U.S. decision to withdraw military forces and that he considers the military withdrawal a turning point for Afghanistan and its neighbors.²⁰² In June, in remarks preceding a meeting with President Biden in Washington, D.C., President Ghani paid tribute to the U.S. Service personnel killed in Afghanistan and acknowledged the U.S. efforts to support his country. President Ghani also emphasized that, in his view, the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan would remain strong after the military withdrawal was complete.²⁰³ In a separate interview in May, President Ghani stated that the United States assessed its interests and made a strategic decision.²⁰⁴ Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai was more critical in his assessment of the U.S. involvement in his country. In a media interview shortly after the end of the quarter he stated that it was better that U.S. and international forces left the country, describing the continued presence of foreign forces as not in the best interest of the Afghan people.²⁰⁵

On April 14, NATO ministers released a statement noting that the alliance had gone to Afghanistan in pursuit of two goals: “to confront al-Qaeda and those who attacked the United States on September 11, and to prevent terrorists from using Afghanistan as a safe haven to attack us” and noting that NATO had worked together with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to achieve these goals. The statement recognized that there was “no military solution to the challenges Afghanistan faces [and therefore] Allies have determined that we will start the withdrawal of Resolute Support Mission forces by May 1.”²⁰⁶

A June press report suggested that “European allies...are frustrated by what they saw as the Biden Administration’s failure to sufficiently consult with allies ahead of the announcement,” although the report also noted that U.S. officials in February had set up a “listening session” with allies “to hear their perspectives and priorities.” The same report also cited frustration among some European allies over the decision to move away from a conditions-based withdrawal from the country.²⁰⁷

In May, the United Kingdom’s Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace, stated that he regretted leaving Afghanistan without setting conditions on the Taliban.²⁰⁸ The DoS reported that it continued to engage and closely consult with NATO allies and partners during the quarter to ensure an orderly and responsible troop drawdown.²⁰⁹ In June, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg acknowledged the risks of withdrawing U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan, but he noted that the intention was never to stay in the country forever.²¹⁰

The DIA, citing media reports, said that Iran welcomes the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces from Afghanistan but “almost certainly” remains concerned about the resulting instability in Afghanistan. According to the DIA, Iran will continue to pursue influence in any future Afghan government through relations with the Afghan government, the Taliban, and power brokers, but Iran opposes the reestablishment of the Taliban’s Islamic Emirate.²¹¹

Pakistan continues to support peace talks while maintaining ties with the Afghan Taliban. According to the DIA, Pakistan’s strategic security objectives in Afghanistan almost certainly continue to be countering Indian influence and mitigating spillover into Pakistani

territory. The Pakistani government is concerned that a civil war in Afghanistan would have destabilizing effects on Pakistan, including an influx of refugees and providing a potential safe haven for anti-Pakistan militants. Pakistani officials have encouraged the Taliban to engage in peace talks with the Afghan government.²¹²

In an interview in May, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan called for a political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and stated that if the Taliban attempted to overthrow the Afghan government in Kabul by military force it would lead to a protracted civil war and an influx of refugees into Pakistan. Prime Minister Khan claimed that Pakistan would use all the tools necessary to support peace in Afghanistan except for military action against the Taliban. He claimed that Pakistan would close the border with Afghanistan if the Taliban were to take over Kabul militarily.²¹³

This quarter, the U.S. Government worked with European partners, Russia, China, and Pakistan to emphasize that the Taliban needs to meet its counterterrorism commitments and to make clear that the international community would not support the imposition by force of a new government in Kabul. On May 18 during the House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on the U.S.-Afghanistan relationship following the military withdrawal, Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad testified that the Taliban had made “substantial progress” in delivering on their counterterrorism commitments, but that more progress was needed.²¹⁴

A communiqué issued in May by the United States, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom, and NATO stated that peace could only be achieved through a negotiated settlement and that a government established by force would cause regional instability. The communiqué also welcomed an expanded role for the UN in contributing to the Afghanistan peace and reconciliation process.²¹⁵

PRESIDENT GHANI DECLARES QUESTION OF PEACE IS IN PAKISTANI HANDS, ACCUSES PAKISTAN OF SUPPORTING THE TALIBAN

In a May interview, President Ghani stated that the United States only plays a minor role in Afghanistan at present and that Pakistan will determine whether peace or continued conflict exists in Afghanistan.²¹⁶ President Ghani went on to accuse the Pakistani government of providing logistical support, financing, and recruits to the Afghan Taliban.²¹⁷ President Ghani claimed that the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff had said that lower level officials within the Pakistani Army support the Taliban, and stopping them from doing so was primarily a question of political will.²¹⁸

In response to these allegations, a Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson stated that the Pakistani government had conveyed its strong concerns regarding Ghani’s allegations to the Afghan ambassador in Islamabad. The spokesperson called the accusations groundless and said that they erode trust, upset the relationship between the two countries, and disregard the constructive role being played by Pakistan in the Afghan peace process.²¹⁹

The Pakistani government subsequently claimed that “hostile intelligence agencies” supported safe havens in Afghanistan that are used by the terrorist group Tehreek-e-Taliban to attack Pakistan.²²⁰

Pakistani Prime Minister Khan claimed that Pakistan would use all the tools necessary to support peace in Afghanistan except for military action against the Taliban.

During the quarter, financial contributions to the Afghan Taliban increased in the Pakistan border regions, according to media reporting citing eyewitness sources. Solicitation efforts traditionally targeted mosques, but Afghan Taliban militants now openly visit the bazaar areas in nearby Pakistani towns. The militants typically solicit contributions of \$50 or more from shopkeepers. Local residents told reporters that solicitation efforts were now commonplace in the towns and cities of Quetta, Kuchlak Bypass, Pashtun Abad, Ishaq Abad, and Farooqia.²²¹

Afghans Who Helped the United States Wait for Visas While Potentially Subject to Taliban Retribution

In 2009, Congress passed the Afghan Allies Protection Act, which established a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program to resettle Afghans who were or are employed in Afghanistan by or on behalf of the U.S. Government or NATO forces and experienced serious, ongoing threats because of their employment, among other requirements. Congress amended the Act in 2013 to improve the efficiency of the visa issuance process.²²²

Although members of Congress attempted to pressure the DoS and the White House to expedite SIV applications throughout the quarter, as of June 2021, more than 18,000 SIV applicants in Afghanistan were waiting for their applications to be processed.²²³ The DoS reported that roughly half of the outstanding 18,000 require initial paperwork from the applicants themselves.²²⁴ The DoS stated that as of the end of the quarter, the DoS Bureau of Consular Affairs and Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs were working as quickly as possible to process the SIVs. Some Afghans have been in the process for years and are still waiting to have their applications adjudicated. The DoS stated that it had surged resources and taken steps to streamline the process, which sped up SIV processing times significantly.²²⁵



Civilian contractors construct a tent in preparation for the arrival of Afghan special immigrant visa applicants at Fort Lee, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo)

The DoS stated that it would continue to process SIV requests after the military withdrawal, including requests received from individuals who remain in Afghanistan. The DoS also stated that it would continue to devote the resources necessary to process as many applications as possible, taking into account the health and security conditions in the country. DoS officials stated that the Department would continue to work with Congress to identify SIV processing efficiencies, including the possibility of eliminating duplicative paperwork and modifying requirements that do not impact national security.²²⁶

The DoS stated that various options can be employed to protect SIV applicants while their cases are pending. For example, the DoS identified a group of SIV applicants who could be offered the opportunity to relocate, along with their immediate families, to a location outside of Afghanistan.²²⁷ DoS officials also stated that Afghans threatened by the Taliban could potentially enter the United States as refugees or through the Humanitarian or Significant Public Benefit Parole, a program which allows an individual temporary entry to the United States at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security.²²⁸ After the end of the quarter, DoS officials stated to the press that the U.S. Government would provide transportation for eligible special immigrant visas applicants either directly to the United States or to a third country, such as Kuwait or Qatar, to complete their application process there.²²⁹

2020 DoS OIG Review Made Recommendations to Improve SIV Program

A June 2020 DoS OIG review of the Afghan SIV program identified several problems related to SIV program implementation. Specifically, the DoS OIG found that staffing levels at the various offices that process Afghan SIVs have generally remained constant since 2016 and were insufficient to reduce the SIV applicant backlog. Insufficient staffing levels at other U.S. Government agencies that play a role in the applicant background check process also contributed to processing delays. Additionally, the DoS OIG found that the DoS lacked a centralized database to effectively document the identity of locally employed staff and contractors. Instead, the DoS relied on multiple information technology systems that were not interoperable.²³⁰

The DoS OIG recommended that the DoS appoint a Senior Coordinating Official for the SIV program and that the DoS assess staffing levels at all stages of the SIV program and report to the DoS OIG on how the DoS intends to reduce the backlog of applicants to comply with the 9-month time frame established by Congress, maintain SIV staffing at appropriate levels, and incorporate this information into congressional reporting.²³¹

In its responses to the recommendations in the DoS OIG review, DoS stated that the Under Secretary for Management was designated by the Secretary of State as the Senior Coordinating Official. Hence, the DoS OIG considered this recommendation closed. The DoS concurred with recommendation to assess staffing levels, reduce applicant backlogs, maintain sufficient staffing levels, and report the information to Congress. Therefore, the DoS considers this recommendation resolved, pending further action.²³²



U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III speaks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani during a bilateral exchange at the Pentagon. (DoD photo)

Afghan Government Seeks Internal Unity to Resist Taliban

According to the DoS, following the military withdrawal announcement, Afghan government officials continue to contend that a negotiated peace is the only way to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan, and they stressed the need for unity among Afghan leaders in support of peace and stability.²³³ In June, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah stated that the political system would collapse if its leaders did not come to a consensus on issues of national importance.²³⁴

In a bid for unity, Afghan political leaders are reportedly advocating for the formation of a Supreme State Council that will aim to bring a unified approach—across party lines—to the peace process in Afghanistan and resist the efforts of the Taliban.²³⁵ The DoS reported that the council would include Afghan leaders from the government and other prominent political leaders. However, the members, mandates, and authorities of the council were still being debated at the end of the quarter.²³⁶ President Ghani said that he supports the effort to form the council.²³⁷ However, political rivals have accused him of refusing to grant the proposed council real authority. An aide to former President Hamid Karzai stated that Mr. Karzai would not sit on a “symbolic” council.²³⁸

On June 21, President Ghani met with a group of prominent Afghan political leaders to urge political unity in the fight against the Taliban.²³⁹ Attendees included political leaders such as Hamid Karzai and several former military leaders associated with the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, a military alliance that resisted the Taliban during the Afghan Civil War of the 1990s and early 2000s.²⁴⁰ Meeting attendees with ties to the Northern Alliance included Mohammed Yunus Qanooni and Mohammed Ismail Khan.²⁴¹ Mohammed Yunus Qanooni was a prominent Tajik leader in the Northern Alliance and later served as Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan under President Hamid Karzai.²⁴² Mohammed Ismail Khan is a Tajik and a prominent former Northern Alliance leader whose loyalists are based in Herat province.²⁴³

President Ghani Replaces Ministers of Defense and Interior, Army Chief of Staff

In June, amid rising Taliban attacks, President Ghani replaced his government's Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior Affairs, and Army Chief of Staff. President Ghani appointed Bismillah Khan Mohammadi acting Defense Minister, replacing Asadullah Khalid.²⁴⁴ Bismillah Khan Mohammadi previously served as Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior Affairs, and Army Chief of Staff under President Hamid Karzai and was a commander with the Northern Alliance.²⁴⁵ President Ghani appointed General Abdul Sattar Mirzakwal as Minister of Interior Affairs. General Mirzakwal previously served as governor of several provinces, including Kunduz.²⁴⁶ President Ghani also appointed General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai as Army Chief of Staff.²⁴⁷

Prominent Northern Alliance Figures Organize Anti-Taliban Militias

As a resurgent Taliban continues to occupy new territory and an overtaxed ANDSF is increasingly unable to provide security in certain areas, Afghan power brokers have increasingly begun raising private militias, according to media reporting.²⁴⁸ During the quarter, leaders related to the Northern Alliance spoke openly of a "second resistance" to the Taliban, and some of the leaders began to mobilize anti-Taliban forces under their respective commands.²⁴⁹

The Northern Alliance comprised militias of primarily Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara ethnicity, while the Taliban was largely of Pashtun ethnicity.²⁵⁰ The period of direct conflict between Northern Alliance and the Taliban included significant violence, often targeting civilians because of their ethnicity.²⁵¹ According to the Afghanistan Analysts Network, a resumption of conflict between the Taliban and the elements which formerly made up the Northern Alliance risks a recurrence of such violence.²⁵²

In April, Ahmed Massoud, a militia commander and son of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the most prominent leader of the Northern Alliance, who was killed by al-Qaeda shortly before the attacks of September 11, 2001, stated in an interview that his followers were prepared for the "failure of peace."²⁵³ In May, Massoud told reporters that more than 100,000 militia leaders, fighters, and other stakeholders in northern Afghanistan have pledged support to his anti-Taliban movement. He said that public concerns about the stagnant peace process, U.S. withdrawal, and apparent Taliban gains against the ANDSF have led an increasing number of Afghans to take up arms and organize independently.²⁵⁴

In April, Ahmed Massoud's followers in Takhar province took up arms against the Taliban. His political office claimed that Massoud also had followers in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz, and Samangan provinces who were also preparing for resistance to the Taliban.²⁵⁵ In May, Massoud held a ceremony in Kabul at which he stated that if a military solution was necessary in Afghanistan, his fighters would support it.²⁵⁶

In April, Ismail Khan, a prominent former Northern Alliance leader and reputedly the most powerful leader in western Afghanistan, held a gathering of dozens of armed men. At the gathering, Khan called for the government to use his militia to fight the Taliban, instead

In June, amid rising Taliban attacks, President Ghani replaced his government's Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior Affairs, and Army Chief of Staff.

of the government security forces.²⁵⁷ Shortly after the end of the quarter, he mobilized hundreds of armed supporters to protect the city of Herat and pledged that they would recapture districts taken by the Taliban in Herat province, one of the provinces most heavily afflicted by Taliban violence during this quarter. However, as of this quarter, it was too early to judge the effectiveness of these militias.²⁵⁸

ETHNIC HAZARAS FORM MILITIAS FOR SELF-DEFENSE

In response to a series of high-profile terrorist attacks on their ethnic and religious minority community, such as the bombing of the girls' school in Kabul (see page 18), many Hazaras have formed private militias, known as “self-protection groups,” according to media reporting. One group’s leader told reporters that the increasing violence against Hazaras, general instability, and the failure of the Afghan government to provide security has led members of the ethnic minority community to take security into their own hands.²⁵⁹

Mohammed Mohaqeq, a prominent Hazara leader who fought with the Northern Alliance, spoke at a memorial event in Kabul in May. In his speech, he stated that his followers had been preparing for conflict and that either the same “heroes” who conducted the first resistance to the Taliban or a new generation would “raise the flag” against the group.²⁶⁰

In response to the reported mobilization of anti-Taliban forces, the Taliban issued a statement on June 23 warning that anyone mobilizing the militias would not receive amnesty.²⁶¹

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT URGES A UNITED FRONT THROUGH “NATIONAL MOBILIZATION”

Private Afghan militias may represent a last line of defense against the Taliban and terrorist groups in certain areas, but they also pose a destabilizing influence within the country, according to media reporting.²⁶²

According to Afghan media sources, by mid-June 2021, hundreds of private militia members in at least nine provinces had taken up arms against the Taliban, in some cases alongside government security forces.²⁶³ The Afghan government cautiously welcomed the support, with President Ghani’s office issuing a statement that the people had “joined the united umbrella of the Republic.” Similarly, the Afghan Ministry of Defense stated that the mobilization had a “considerable role in retaking territories...and prevented the fall of some areas.”²⁶⁴

Acting Defense Minister Bismillah Khan Mohammadi also said that “patriots and people everywhere [should] stand alongside their security and defense forces” and pledged government support in the form of “equipment and resources” to those private militias that oppose the Taliban.²⁶⁵ According to media reporting, the Afghan government has followed through on this pledge, launching a “National Mobilization” campaign in late June to provide material support to local militias in their fight against the Taliban.²⁶⁶ The Afghan Ministry of Defense stated to local media that the activities of the “public forces” would be well-managed but did not provide details.²⁶⁷

Private Afghan militias may represent a last line of defense against the Taliban and terrorist groups in certain areas, but they also pose a destabilizing influence within the country, according to media reporting.

While these militia groups have proven effective in combat against the Taliban, their leaders' ultimate goals, including the decentralization of government in Afghanistan, do not directly align with those of the Afghan government, according to media reports.²⁶⁸ A former advisor to the Afghan government told reporters that the National Mobilization campaign would ultimately backfire, predicting that once corruption decreased the militias' promised pay, the fighters would turn on the government.²⁶⁹ Atta Mohammad Noor, a prominent northern-based power broker, posted a statement on social media that read: "We ask the government to provide the National Mobilization with adequate facilities. If it fails to do so, it will be held accountable for any consequences."²⁷⁰

DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Taliban Violence Limits Humanitarian Access, Expected to Worsen

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) reported that it expects constraints on humanitarian access to increase as the Taliban and the ANDSF continue to fight for territorial control.²⁷¹ According to the BHA, increased violence and changes in control of territory require humanitarian assistance organizations to pause operations and reconfirm safe access to, or through, the affected areas.²⁷² Some of the BHA's implementers reported that temporary movement limitations forced them to use alternate transport routes due to insecurity.²⁷³ For example, the World Food Programme's (WFP) main supply route from Herat to Ghor was blocked by a Taliban commander who posed a threat of diverting humanitarian cargo. This led WFP personnel to use an alternate corridor, adding 2 days to the trip and delaying the arrival of emergency food assistance.²⁷⁴

A BHA implementer working in Faryab province encountered resistance when conducting nutrition training due to ongoing access negotiations with the Taliban and increased levels of violence.²⁷⁵ Additionally, increased tensions between the Afghan government and the Taliban in Badghis province delayed a BHA implementer's shelter assessments and required additional access negotiations between local leaders and members of the Taliban.²⁷⁶ According to BHA, access is expected to remain challenging in the upcoming months, with continued conflict between the ANDSF and the Taliban expected to continue interfering with humanitarian activities.²⁷⁷

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) there were 325 reported incidents involving efforts to impede humanitarian access in Afghanistan in April and May.²⁷⁸ OCHA noted that the Taliban was responsible for the majority of these incidents. Most of the incidents involved attempts to restrict humanitarian assistance providers' movements.²⁷⁹ In April, the Taliban continued to threaten the security and safety of humanitarian workers.²⁸⁰ According to OCHA, the Taliban threatened both local and international female humanitarian assistance workers in eastern Afghanistan. In Kunar province, the Taliban issued an order to target female healthcare, non-governmental organization, and government employees.²⁸¹ Additionally, the ANDSF placed movement restrictions on healthcare organizations and the Taliban forced healthcare workers to provide medical care to its wounded fighters in Taliban-controlled territory.²⁸² In May, OCHA reported that recent cases of the Taliban kidnapping humanitarian workers suggested a lack

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Despite the U.S. and NATO military withdrawal, the BHA reported that its implementers plan to remain in Afghanistan and deliver assistance as long as that remains feasible.

of communication between civilian and military Taliban elements, since humanitarian access had previously been negotiated in specific territories where the kidnappings happened.²⁸³

Despite the U.S. and NATO military withdrawal, the BHA reported that its implementers plan to remain in Afghanistan and deliver assistance as long as that remains feasible. However, access restrictions and direct threats against staff could jeopardize future operations.²⁸⁴ This quarter, the BHA engaged in U.S. Government interagency discussions and contingency planning. The BHA reported that it remained in close communication with implementers regarding the impact of the U.S. troop withdrawal on humanitarian assistance programs.²⁸⁵ The BHA reported that USAID is working with other U.S. Government agencies on steps to ensure humanitarian partners can adapt or expand assistance based on humanitarian need in potential scenarios following the withdrawal of the U.S. military.²⁸⁶

New Internal Displacement Doubles from Last Year Due to Increased Violence

According to the BHA, increased violence between ANDSF and non-state armed groups increased population displacement throughout Afghanistan in recent months.²⁸⁷ According to media reports, as of July 4, the Taliban controlled roughly a third of all districts in Afghanistan.²⁸⁸ Consequently, as violence increases throughout Afghanistan, USAID projects that the number of internally displaced persons (IDP) will likely increase.²⁸⁹ According to OCHA, 205,386 Afghans were displaced between January 1 and June 27, 2021, because of conflict, which was more than twice the number of IDPs during the same period last year.²⁹⁰ The 2021 Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan—a multi-country donor planning document—projected that the total number of IDPs in 2021 could reach 500,000.²⁹¹

Despite the increase in violence, the BHA reported it was not comprehensively revising its programming. Instead, the BHA's implementers engaged in contingency planning to stay and deliver aid as long as they have safe access and the ability to adhere to internationally recognized humanitarian principles.²⁹²

The BHA identified the targeting of women and specifically, professional women, as a very worrying trend.²⁹³ According to media reporting, from the end of March through June a series of high-profile attacks and killings of female polio vaccinators caused BHA implementers to pause operations. Additionally, violence targeting women working as healthcare providers compromised BHA implementers' responses in more conservative provinces, such as Nangahar, because in those provinces only women are permitted to provide healthcare to other women and girls, due to strict social norms related to gender.²⁹⁴

Military Withdrawal and Insecurity Disrupt Afghan Economy and USAID Economic Programming

According to USAID, the U.S. and NATO military withdrawal will have direct and indirect effects on the Afghan economy and USAID's economic programming.²⁹⁵ The withdrawal will cause a direct reduction of spending on various goods and services in the local economy by the military and civilian agencies as they either end or reduce their activities. Indirect effects on the economy will be more difficult to measure and will be based on how

the country adapts to the security situation and increased violence.²⁹⁶ However, according to USAID, the general effects of insecurity and violence on the economy are not new dynamics, as conflict conditions have been the norm in Afghanistan for many years.²⁹⁷ USAID reported that other challenges to economic programming stem from such issues as leadership changes in the Afghan government, the COVID-19 pandemic, increased conflict, limited infrastructure, corruption, uncertainty in the peace process, and the closure of customs ports.²⁹⁸

In addition to weakening the economy, the rising level of violence also affects USAID implementers' ability to safely operate and move around the country. USAID reported that its economic programming activities are conducted in urban areas or in provincial capitals and not in rural areas controlled by the Taliban. However, as the Taliban continues to capture more territory, it is unclear how implementer operations will be affected.²⁹⁹

USAID's Economic Programming Responds to the Needs of the Economy

According to USAID's Office of Economic Growth (OEG), it is implementing 11 active awards valued at more than \$380 million with 2 additional awards currently in the procurement process.³⁰⁰ The OEG's activities are designed to increase export-driven growth, bolster the private sector, and improve the reach of Afghan products to international markets.³⁰¹

This quarter, the OEG reported that it worked to increase international trade and connectivity.³⁰² During the quarter, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to a 6-month extension of the Afghanistan Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement to allow both countries more time to continue negotiations on the agreement's renewal. Both countries also took steps to implement the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets, also known as the TIR Convention.³⁰³ The OEG reported that it led a working group that supported the bilateral negotiations on both of the trade agreements currently under negotiation between Afghanistan and Pakistan.³⁰⁴ Additionally, the OEG supported the Afghan consulate in Mumbai, India, by hosting a virtual saffron trade business-to-business event to promote Afghan saffron exports to India.³⁰⁵

According to the OEG, its main activity that supports increasing the competitiveness of select business sectors is the Afghanistan Competitiveness for Export-Oriented Business Activity, a \$105 million program, funded through 2025.³⁰⁶ The OEG reported that this program helps Afghan export businesses increase sales in international markets by helping improve production processes, increase productivity, and help facilitate export procedures so companies can meet international demand at competitive prices in five areas of production: carpets, cashmere, gemstones and jewelry, stone, and saffron.³⁰⁷ OEG implementers also created a business recovery task force to support the Afghan Ministry of Industry and Commerce's efforts to provide solutions to businesses struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁰⁸ According to the OEG, prior to the establishment of the business recovery task force, there was no government mechanism working to address the economic challenges presented by COVID-19 or that organized the government and the private sector to search for solutions jointly.³⁰⁹

According to USAID's Office of Economic Growth (OEG), it is implementing 11 active awards valued at more than \$380 million with 2 additional awards currently in the procurement process.

While little to no progress has been made at the Afghan peace negotiations, the Office of Transition Initiatives continued its efforts to support the Afghan State Ministry for Peace.

The OEG reported that it is currently implementing five activities aimed at increasing employment opportunities.³¹⁰ According to the OEG, based on the most recent reporting from implementers, their activities provided approximately 12,000 beneficiaries with new or better jobs and supported another 9,400 beneficiaries throughout Afghanistan. The OEG reported it is in the process of initiating performance evaluations for three of these projects to gather evidence more effectively on the achievements reported as well as the lessons learned for future programming.³¹¹

USAID Promotes Initiative to Increase Afghan Popular Support for Peace

In August 2020, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) established the Peace Support Initiative program to strengthen Afghan public opinion for a sustainable resolution to the country's conflict.³¹² While little to no progress has been made at the Afghan peace negotiations, the OTI continued its efforts to support the Afghan State Ministry for Peace. The OTI reported that during the quarter, implementers conducted research, held community peace dialogues, and provided equipment to support to the ministry.³¹³

During the quarter, the OTI implementers focused on several research topics including Taliban messaging and competing narratives on the peace process, local conflict management, and strategic monitoring of Taliban communications.³¹⁴ The OTI reported the research and reporting was widely shared with the Afghan government, the High Council for National Reconciliation, and the USAID missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan.³¹⁵

According to the OTI, implementers hosted community peace dialogues in eight Afghan provinces, bringing together women and men to discuss the peace process, women's role in the process, and issues affecting peace in their respective provinces.³¹⁶ The dialogue series convened people from urban and rural areas who typically do not spend time together and often have different political views.³¹⁷ The findings from the community peace dialogues—including a strong desire for peace but growing concern about Taliban military advances—were shared directly with the Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation.³¹⁸

The OTI reported that it was also in the process of providing communications and production equipment to the Afghan State Ministry for Peace to strengthen its strategic communications capacity.³¹⁹ For example, the OTI is in the process of providing the Ministry's Kabul office and its newly established regional offices with computers, cameras, software, and other equipment.³²⁰

Food Security Expected to Improve Slightly but Access Remains Constrained

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative, an internationally used system for classifying the severity of food insecurity, nearly 11 million people in Afghanistan—approximately 29 percent of the total population—experienced acute food insecurity due to conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, high food prices, and severe unemployment between April and May.³²¹ Despite the increased violence and spread of COVID-19, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification system forecasts that food

insecurity will improve slightly between June and November, which is Afghanistan's harvest and post-harvest season, with the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity decreasing to approximately 9.5 million.³²² USAID BHA noted that increased conflict, subsequent human displacement, and below-average levels of precipitation during the 2020–2021 wet season further contributed to food insecurity across Afghanistan.³²³ The BHA also reported that wheat and livestock production in 2021 are expected to decrease by 31 and 30 percent, respectively, compared to the 2020 season.³²⁴

From March to May in Afghanistan, 73 percent of households surveyed throughout Afghanistan by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification system reported having debt, and 74 percent reported that food was the main reason for borrowing money.³²⁵ This cycle of accumulating debt to pay for food resulted in most Afghan households experiencing limited financial access to food.³²⁶ In addition to broad unemployment, USAID's Famine Early Warning Systems Network reported that below-average remittances—money that migrants send back to families in origin countries—and above-average food prices will likely continue to put food access pressure on the worst affected households in the absence of humanitarian assistance.³²⁷

USAID RESPONDS TO INCREASED FOOD SECURITY NEEDS

USAID BHA reported that in addition to planned fiscal year programming to address widespread food insecurity in Afghanistan, the BHA requested and received an additional \$15 million in funding to mitigate food insecurity and displacement of rural populations caused by drought conditions.³²⁸ The BHA is providing \$38 million in additional funds to the WFP to address food security and nutrition needs of Afghan households made vulnerable by the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.³²⁹ The BHA reported that by the end of June, it had committed \$36 million in FY 2021 funds to prevent and treat acute malnutrition by supporting infant and young child feeding programs, nutrition education, and research on emergency nutrition responses.³³⁰ With financial support from the BHA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is providing 1,035 metric tons of therapeutic foods, which consist of a pre-packed paste made from peanuts, oil, sugar, milk powder, and vitamins and mineral supplements to address severe acute malnutrition across Afghanistan.³³¹

According to the BHA, a USAID implementer distributed cash-for-food that targeted approximately 3,000 households in Faryab and Badakhshan provinces this quarter. The cash distributions provided to each household covered food needs for 3 months.³³² Additionally, with the support of the BHA and other donors, the WFP provided food assistance—including in-kind food distributions, cash transfers for food, and food vouchers—to more than 1.7 million food-insecure people across Afghanistan.³³³

Afghanistan Faces High COVID-19 Burden with Rapid Rise in Cases

In the weeks following Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, COVID-19 cases surged in Afghanistan, straining limited resources.³³⁴ Weekly reported COVID-19 cases increased by more than 2,700 percent during the quarter, from 382 cases during the week of March 29, rising to 10,528 cases during the week of June 29. Recorded deaths during the

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A press conference in Afghanistan announcing the delivery of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses from the United States. (DoS photo)

same period increased from 27 to 549 per week.³³⁵ USAID reported that 65 percent of the 39 hospitals designated for COVID-19 patients were over capacity, with bed occupancy rates up to 220 percent in Zabul province.³³⁶ As of June 30, Afghanistan had a daily test positivity rate of 50 percent, indicating both under-testing and widespread transmission of COVID-19.³³⁷

According to USAID, Afghanistan's limited national lab capacity is primarily focused on COVID-19 diagnosis but has little ability to detect the evolution of the pandemic. Only the labs in Kabul, Herat, and Jalalabad have the capability to sequence variants, and as of this quarter, they were only able to identify the Alpha variant.³³⁸ The Afghan Minister of Public Health told reporters that the more transmissible Delta variant was mainly responsible for the recent increase in cases. However, according to USAID, the Afghan government lacks the domestic capacity to test for the Delta variant.³³⁹

According to OCHA, Afghanistan has 30 operational laboratories with a capacity of 8,500 tests per day.³⁴⁰ USAID and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria built these laboratories to diagnose tuberculosis. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, labs diverted most testing reagents, diagnostics, and consumables intended for tuberculosis and other diseases to COVID-19, reducing testing capacity for tuberculosis³⁴¹

AFGHANISTAN BEGINS ADMINISTERING COVID-19 VACCINATION

OCHA reported that as of July 1, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health had vaccinated more than 898,000 people, or approximately 2 percent of the population, with a focus on priority populations including health workers, teachers, and people with comorbidities (heart disease, tuberculosis, and diabetes).³⁴² Only 37 percent of those vaccinated

Table 1.

Afghanistan Commitments and Deliveries of COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccine	Mechanism	Committed	Delivered
AstraZeneca/SII	Bilateral-India	500,000	500,000
AstraZeneca/SII	Bilateral-Sweden	124,000	No data
AstraZeneca/SII	COVAX	3.024 million	468,000
SinoPharm	Bilateral-China	700,000	700,000
Johnson & Johnson	Bilateral-United States	3.0 million	3.0 million

Source: UN OCHA, "Afghanistan Strategic Situation Report: COVID-19," 7/1/2021; USAID OHN response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/23/2021.

were women, who faced barriers that impede their access to vaccinations, testing, and treatment.³⁴³ (See Table 1.)

USAID reported that it increased outreach to women, specifically by communicating the risk associated with not getting vaccinated.³⁴⁴ USAID also worked with the World Bank to deploy female vaccinators, with the goal of having 50 percent female vaccinators at all facilities.³⁴⁵

The National Plan for COVID-19 vaccination published by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health lists population priorities for the next vaccine shipments, including security personnel, prisoners, people over the age of 50, nomadic populations aged 30 to 50 years, and people living in IDP camps aged 30 to 50 years.³⁴⁶ The Afghan government has reported that its goal is to vaccinate 20 percent of the population by the end of 2021.³⁴⁷

Multiple factors limited Afghanistan's vaccination campaign during the quarter. To meet its own increased domestic needs, the Indian government restricted the export of AstraZeneca/SII vaccine it had previously committed to Afghanistan and which were scheduled to be provided via COVAX by May.³⁴⁸ According to Afghanistan's national COVID-19 vaccination plan, Afghan health facilities lack the ultra-cold freezer capacity required to accept some alternatives to the AstraZeneca vaccine.³⁴⁹

While vaccine availability was limited this quarter, an Afghanistan National Public Health Institute/UNICEF public perception survey noted overall high demand for vaccines, with 69 percent of respondents indicating they wished to be vaccinated if given the opportunity.³⁵⁰ However, as additional priority populations become eligible for vaccination, efforts to vaccinate nomadic populations, IDPs, and other vulnerable groups are limited due to some negative perceptions about the vaccine and barriers to accessing care.³⁵¹

OCHA reported that increasing security concerns and access to women and populations in areas outside of Afghan government control posed further challenges to reaching the government's vaccination milestones.³⁵² In March, the Taliban temporarily halted vaccination administration in areas under its control, according to USAID. Vaccinations later resumed in Taliban-controlled territory once facilities administering vaccines

The Afghan Ministry of Public Health reported that as of June 30, 1,780 patients were currently hospitalized for COVID-19 in Afghanistan.

completed trust-building and transparency activities with the Taliban.³⁵³ According to media reporting, a Taliban spokesperson noted that the group would only agree to the vaccination campaign if it was implemented in coordination with the Taliban's health commission in accordance with the Taliban's rules, such as only performing vaccinations at health clinics rather than going door-to-door.³⁵⁴ However, in areas with increasing insecurity and fighting, the vaccination campaign has paused, according to USAID.³⁵⁵ Even in relatively accessible areas, some media sources were skeptical that the national vaccination plans would provide access to the vaccine due to government corruption.³⁵⁶

USAID MONITORED DONATED VENTILATORS AND PROCURED OXYGEN SUPPORT

According to USAID's Office of Health and Nutrition, as of June 23, 54 ventilators donated by USAID were used on 626 patients in 12 health care facilities designated strictly for COVID-19 patients across Afghanistan. Forty-six other ventilators donated by USAID were used at non-COVID-19 health care facilities to support other respiratory and emergency patients.³⁵⁷ USAID reported that it provided health-system support, monitored ventilator usage, and provided clinical and nonclinical technical assistance to facilities that received ventilators.³⁵⁸ The Afghan Ministry of Public Health reported that as of June 30, 1,780 patients were currently hospitalized for COVID-19 in Afghanistan. As hospitals continued to strain from over-capacity inpatient wards and intensive care units, ventilators provided lifesaving support to limited subset of patients.³⁵⁹

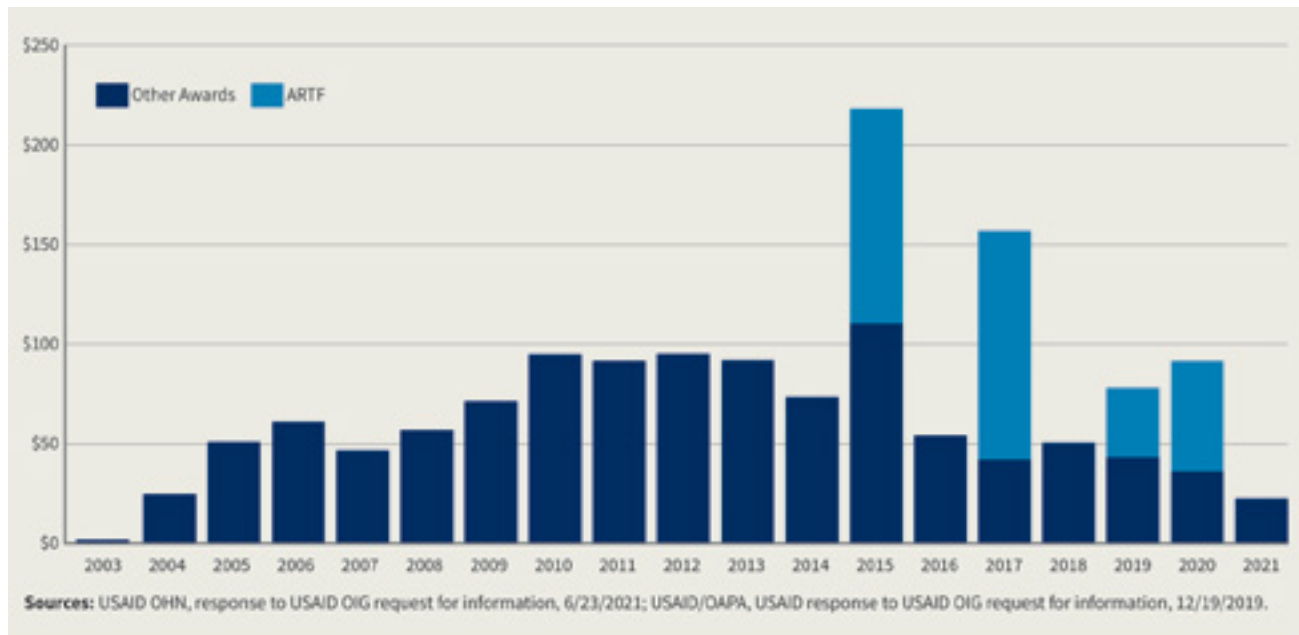
Through the Global Health Supply Chain–Procurement and Supply Management project, USAID procured four oxygen plants for hospitals in Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Mazar-e-Sharif, according to the Office of Health and Nutrition.³⁶⁰ Once the oxygen plants are installed, USAID plans to provide technical assistance to the hospitals, with the goal of providing oxygen for up to 65 patients per day per plant. USAID also procured 300 additional compressed oxygen cylinders for Afghanistan through this project.³⁶¹

DESPITE USAID SUPPORT TO HEALTH SYSTEMS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, OVERALL HEALTH BUDGETS DECLINE

USAID OHN reported that it supported the Afghan government's COVID-19 response and vaccination program this quarter through the multilaterally funded Sehatmandi health-service delivery program and two bilateral activities that provide service delivery and technical assistance: the Urban Health Initiative (UHI) and Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT).³⁶²

USAID reported that it continued to fund multilateral health projects alongside bilateral health projects (for example, approximately \$55.4 million to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and \$35.3 million to other bilateral health awards in Afghanistan in FY 2020) and plans to support Sehatmandi follow-on contracts.³⁶³ However, USAID reported there was limited Sehatmandi monitoring and reporting of contract performance compared to activities directly managed by USAID.³⁶⁴ To increase accountability, USAID engaged the World Bank and Afghan Ministry of Public Health to perform additional third-party monitoring funded through the USAID Mission in Kabul in addition to the existing semiannual reporting by

Figure 3.

Historical USAID Funding for Healthcare Programming in Afghanistan (Disbursements in \$ Millions)

the World Bank in an attempt to reduce the lag time in receiving information to make timely interventions.³⁶⁵ (See Figure 3.)

Despite the shift to COVID-19-focused programming, the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plans strategic planning and performance tools for UHI and AFIAT did not include any indicators to measure results related to COVID-19 interventions, such as number of patients educated on vaccine or number of patients vaccinated.³⁶⁶ It is unclear how USAID tracks UHI and AFIAT progress implementing COVID-19 prevention, treatment, or vaccination. Furthermore, indicator baselines were largely set using data from prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires monitoring the impact of the pandemic on primary care services.³⁶⁷

SUPPORT TO MISSION

The U.S. Embassy Adjusts Footprint in Kabul

In late April, the DoS ordered 52 nonessential personnel to leave the country due to concerns about increased violence surrounding the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from the country.³⁶⁸

On June 17, according to a management notice shared by the media, officials at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul ordered an immediate lockdown of staff at the Embassy due to COVID-19. The management notice confined staff members to their quarters with exceptions for meals and outdoor recreation and noted that 95 percent of the COVID-19 cases were among unvaccinated individuals.³⁶⁹ According to media reporting, as of June 23, there were 159 cases of

COVID-19 inside the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, in addition to several people whose conditions required oxygen treatment or who were medically evacuated due to the severity of their symptoms.³⁷⁰ After the end of the quarter, the DoS required that all contractors working at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul be vaccinated.³⁷¹

On June 25, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul took operational control of the area adjacent to its campus that was formerly occupied by the NATO Resolute Support Headquarters. The area is now referred to as the Embassy South Compound.³⁷²

DoD Returns Key Bases to the Afghan Ministry of Defense

On May 13, media reporting stated that U.S. forces left Kandahar Airfield, one of the largest military bases in Afghanistan, and returned control of the military part of the facility back to the MoD. Located in southern Afghanistan, Kandahar Airfield once hosted 26,000 U.S. and coalition troops. It has recently served as a training hub for the ANDSF.³⁷³ U.S. forces did not hold a formal transfer ceremony, according to media reporting.³⁷⁴

USFOR-A said that the ANDSF took ownership of Kandahar Airfield in January 2021 and had full control of all areas of the base as of May 2021, prior to the departure of U.S. forces. The Afghan Government will continue to use Kandahar as a military airfield and a transportation hub for domestic travel. The MoD established a security battalion specifically for Kandahar Airfield prior to handover, according to USFOR-A.³⁷⁵

On May 2, U.S. forces returned Camp Antonik, a Helmand military base, to the MoD, according to an ANA statement to the press. The statement said that Camp Antonik will continue to be a headquarters for Afghan special operations forces and that the ANDSF will intensify their operations against terrorist strongholds in the region.³⁷⁶

Shortly after the quarter ended, on July 2, U.S. and NATO forces left Bagram Airfield, located about 40 miles north of Kabul. ANDSF officials told reporters that the remaining 3,000 Afghan troops were given less than 24 hours' notice to secure the base before coalition troops left.³⁷⁷ Afghan military officials told reporters that the U.S. forces left Bagram Airfield by shutting off the electricity and departing in the night without notifying the base's new Afghan commander, who discovered the Americans' departure more than 2 hours after they had left.³⁷⁸

DoD spokesperson John Kirby disputed this characterization of the U.S. military's departure from Bagram Airfield. He told reporters that U.S. military leaders briefed and coordinated with Afghan military and civilian leaders, including a walkthrough of facilities on the base. However, Mr. Kirby added that for operational security reasons, U.S. forces did not divulge the exact hour of their planned departure to the Afghan forces, and he said that final conversations occurred about 48 hours prior to that time.³⁷⁹

In June, an ANA recruiting officer told reporters that the ANA had begun recruiting between 1,500 and 1,700 former ANA personnel and as well as new recruits to maintain Bagram Airfield as coalition troops prepared to depart. The Afghan officer said that the additional troops would most likely be needed just to hold the base, as opposed to conducting operations. The ANA's usual recruitment goal, which it typically fails to meet, is 47,000 new troops per year.³⁸⁰

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Status of Withdrawal and Retrograde of U.S. Equipment

USCENTCOM reported that as of June 28, the retrograde of equipment from Afghanistan that was on hand as of April 30 was more than 50 percent complete. This included nearly 15,943 pieces of equipment turned into the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) for disposition, most of which consists of federal excess personal property (i.e., neither defense articles nor major equipment).³⁸¹

USFOR-A reported that as of June 30, 3,541 pieces of nonrolling stock equipment and 282 pieces of rolling stock had been processed through the retrograde process.³⁸² Rolling stock refers to equipment such as vehicles, while nonrolling stock is equipment that doesn't roll on tires or tracks.³⁸³ The equipment was returned to the U.S. Army inventory at redistribution property assistance team sites in Afghanistan and Kuwait. According to CSTC-A this equipment included military vehicles, power generation equipment, weapons, and communications equipment.³⁸⁴

According to USFOR-A, equipment that is not to be retrograded is instead “demilitarized,” which means it is destroyed or otherwise rendered not usable for its original intended purpose. USFOR-A reported that 14,117 pieces of non-rolling stock equipment and 103 pieces of rolling stock were demilitarized by the DLA in Afghanistan.³⁸⁵ As of the end of the quarter, 13,856 pieces of nonrolling stock and 101 pieces of rolling stock remained to be demilitarized and removed from the property books.³⁸⁶

U.S. Army maintenance teams reinstall a rotor blade on a CH-47F Chinook helicopter returned to the United States. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Types of equipment demilitarized included power generators, logistical equipment, military vehicles, nontactical vehicles, uniforms, and office equipment. According to USFOR-A, the equipment is destroyed to the point of being rendered into scrap material.³⁸⁷ Equipment destroyed included approximately \$106.7 million in force protection and communication equipment, \$19.6 million worth of military and non-tactical vehicles, \$12 million in vehicle parts and tools, and an \$8.8 million unmanned aerial vehicle.³⁸⁸ OUSD(P) stated that virtually all of this equipment was obsolete or no longer usable or not transferrable to other countries.³⁸⁹

Shortly after the quarter ended, press outlets reported that large quantities of equipment were “left behind” by departing U.S. forces from Bagram Airfield. The reports depicted photos of storage lots on the facility full of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, pickup trucks and other vehicles, and further reporting indicated ammunitions and small arms as part of the equipment left behind. It was not immediately clear whether that equipment was destined for retrograde, or to be transferred to the Afghans.³⁹⁰

OUSD(P) stated that these reports were misleading, and the only MRAP vehicles that were left behind in Afghanistan were either 35 transferred to the Afghan government or smaller quantities that were obsolete and not serviceable and thus shredded. Additionally, the DoD transferred approximately \$4 million worth of small arms and ammunition from U.S. Army stock. Virtually everything else transferred to the Afghan government was non-defense article foreign excess personal property such as pickup trucks, kitchen equipment, generators, buildings, and other equipment that had been used by U.S. forces at various bases. According to OUSD(P), USFOR-A accounted for all items that were transferred to the Afghan government in a process that was coordinated with the Afghan government.³⁹¹

USCENTCOM reported that, as of July 15, it was not aware of any unaccounted-for items left behind during the ongoing withdrawal from Afghanistan and told the DoD OIG that all equipment in country was either in the retrograde process or already removed from country, demilitarized, or transferred to the ANDSF.³⁹²



Tractor-trailer trucks deliver munitions retrograded from Afghanistan to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo)

USFOR-A reported that equipment turned in after closure of the redistribution property assistance team site in Afghanistan would be shipped directly to Kuwait. Unit representatives were responsible for collecting, accounting, and turning in this equipment in accordance with property accountability procedures.³⁹³ USFOR-A reported that equipment that could fall into enemy hands and ultimately be used against U.S. forces or their allies was not authorized for transfer to the Afghan government.³⁹⁴

DoD Issued Contracts for Work to be Undertaken After Withdrawal

According to media reporting, the DoD awarded at least 18 contracts totaling \$931 million related to work in Afghanistan past the originally agreed upon May 1 withdrawal deadline, with some of these contracts having completion dates in 2023 or later.³⁹⁵ Former DoD Comptroller Dov Zakheim told reporters that if the DoD contracted for nearly a billion dollars in work it ultimately will not need, it could face significant lawsuits or potentially be forced to pay large settlements to end the contracts early.³⁹⁶ Under the Federal Acquisition Regulation, some of these contracts may be canceled under a provision known as “Termination for Convenience of the Government,” but the DoD may still be liable for the contractors’ costs associated with termination of ongoing work, any work already completed, and potentially a reasonable allowance for profit.³⁹⁷

The DoD issued a press release on March 12 announcing that it awarded a contract for \$9.7 million for force-protection efforts at Bagram Airfield to be completed by March 2022.³⁹⁸ However, all U.S. and coalition forces as well as contractors departed Bagram Airfield on July 2, 2021.³⁹⁹ According to media reporting, 70 U.S. security and defense firms advertised more than 100 new security and intelligence positions in Afghanistan in April—some with year-long contracts—at locations across the country, including Bagram Airfield.⁴⁰⁰ According to another media report, the DoD awarded two contracts totaling \$68.2 million for security services in Afghanistan with completion dates in late 2023 and early 2026.⁴⁰¹

DoD’s FY 2022 Budget Request Reduces OFS Spending, but Increases Funding for Afghan Forces

In May, the Biden Administration submitted its FY 2022 budget request to Congress. The budget request included \$715 billion in funding for the DoD, an increase from the \$704 billion in DoD funding enacted for FY 2021. The FY 2021 enacted appropriation for the DoD included \$53 billion in overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding to support operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. The FY 2021 enacted appropriation for DoD also included \$16 billion designated as OCO funding for base budget requirements. To comply with the Office of Management and Budget direction due to the expiration of the Budget Control Act of 2011, the DoD shifted funds that had previously been designated as OCO to the base budget in FY 2022, eliminating OCO as a separate funding category. As a result, both direct war and enduring operations costs for OFS will be included in the FY 2022 DoD base budget.⁴⁰²

FY 2022 request of \$715 billion for DoD included \$42.1 billion for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. This funding is divided into two categories: \$14.3 billion for direct war requirements—combat or combat support operations that are not expected to continue once

combat operations end—and \$27.8 billion for enduring in-theater and domestic costs that are expected to remain after combat operations end. Historically funded under the OCO appropriation, these enduring theater costs include overseas bases, depot maintenance, ship operations, and weapons system sustainment. Enduring theater requirements are not broken out by country, but the total request is a decrease from the \$34 billion enacted for FY 2021. The \$8.9 billion in direct war requirements requested for OFS for FY 2022 is a reduction from the \$12.9 billion enacted in FY 2021.⁴⁰³

In testimony to Congress, Acting Secretary of the Air Force John Roth said that while the FY 2022 budget no longer includes separate OCO funding, it requests base budget funds for both day-to-day war operations at a decreased pace and for an enduring presence to be maintained in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. Secretary Roth said that this request includes approximately \$10 billion for a series of air bases in the region to provide over-the-horizon support in Afghanistan.⁴⁰⁴

Within the \$8.9 billion in direct war requirements for OFS, the budget requests \$3.3 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the principal funding stream for U.S. Government support to sustain the ANDSF. This is an increase from the \$3 billion enacted in FY 2021, which was \$968 million below amount requested by the DoD that year.⁴⁰⁵ A senior official of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) official told reporters that “with the withdrawal of U.S. Soldiers from Afghanistan, support to the Afghan security forces remains key in maintaining our ongoing national security objectives in the region” and the DoD increased its request for ASFF because “given that we are pulling out of Afghanistan we need to provide some additional security support for the ASFF—for the forces there.”⁴⁰⁶

Figure 4.
Afghanistan Funding by Budget Activity Group, in Thousands



As shown in Figure 4, the \$3.3 billion request for the ASFF in FY 2022 includes \$1.1 billion for the ANA, \$517 million for the ANP, \$758 million for the AAF, and \$942 million for the ASSF. Most of this funding is executed through DoD contracts for goods and services to be used by the ANDSF for defense articles and services, while a smaller portion is provided directly to the Afghan government. The portion provided directly to the Afghan government generally covers ANA pay and funds some Afghan government contracts, mainly for facilities operations and maintenance.⁴⁰⁷

DoS Law Enforcement Support Bureau Plans for Multiple Scenarios in Afghanistan as INL Program Affected by Insecurity and COVID-19

The DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the bureau implementing DoS justice sector reform and counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan, reported that it was planning for multiple scenarios for its programming in Afghanistan based upon security factors. When the U.S. Embassy in Kabul ordered the departure of nonessential personnel in late April, INL transferred some functions to remote locations. INL reported that it was prepared to continue the bureau's ongoing work in Afghanistan if programs can be implemented and monitored. INL reported that oversight of its current programs is conducted by a third-party monitor.⁴⁰⁸

INL reported that, during the quarter, its programs supporting Afghan prison systems were significantly affected by the worsening security situation and the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases within the Afghan civilian prison system. INL reported that it postponed planned training until such time as the COVID-19 outbreak is contained and evacuated several staff members due to insecurity in their home provinces. INL reported that it was working closely with the Afghan Office of Prison Administration to promote safety measures to reduce the threat of COVID-19 and was monitoring the security situation in each province daily to determine when staff may return to their posts.⁴⁰⁹

USAID Operations Increasingly Rely on Local Employees

Despite the ordered departure of nonessential embassy personnel, USAID reported that it had no plan to alter the authorized number of USAID locally engaged employees available to work at the embassy.⁴¹⁰

According to USAID, as of June 23, the ordered departure applied to three direct hire USAID employees and two U.S. personal service contractors, who were teleworking from external locations.⁴¹¹

According to USAID, 79 percent of locally engaged employees were able to telework full-time as of June 15. However, according to a USAID staff member, the conspicuous appearance of the solar panels used by locally engaged staff to engage in telework increased their susceptibility to attacks by the Taliban.⁴¹² USAID reported that as of June 23, all locally engaged staff have been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated.⁴¹³

Despite the ordered departure of nonessential embassy personnel, USAID reported that it had no plan to alter the authorized number of USAID locally engaged employees available to work at the embassy.







Secretary of State Blinken visits the Memorial Wall at the U.S. Mission in Kabul, which honors Afghan and American personnel who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan. (DoS photo)

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

- 54 Strategic Planning
- 56 Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Activity
- 65 Investigations and Hotline Activity

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This section of the report provides information on Lead IG and partner agencies' strategic planning efforts; completed, ongoing, and planned Lead IG and partner agencies' oversight work related to audits, inspections, and evaluations; Lead IG investigations; and hotline activities from April 1 through June 30, 2021.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Pursuant to Section 8L of the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. This effort includes reviewing and analyzing completed oversight, management, and other relevant reports to identify systemic problems, trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform future oversight projects. The Lead IG agencies issue an annual joint strategic oversight plan for each operation.

FY 2021 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan Activities

In 2015, upon designation of the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS), the three Lead IG agencies developed and implemented a joint strategic oversight plan for comprehensive oversight of OFS. The three Lead IG agencies update the oversight plan annually.

The FY 2021 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OFS, effective October 1, 2020, organized OFS-related oversight projects into three strategic oversight areas: 1) Military Operations and Security Cooperation; 2) Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, Development, and Reconstruction; and 3) Support to Mission. The *FY 2021 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations* included the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OFS.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group serves as a primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S. Government-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to Afghanistan and the Middle East. The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group meets quarterly to provide a forum for coordination of the broader Federal oversight community, including the military service IGs and audit agencies, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), and the OIGs from the Departments of Justice, the Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security.

In May 2021, the Joint Planning Group held its 54th meeting, carried out virtually to accommodate participants because of coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) precautions. Guest speaker Peter Velz, director of Afghanistan, Resource Policy and Requirements, for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), discussed planning efforts and challenges related to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.



**FY 2021
Comprehensive
Oversight Plan
for Overseas
Contingency
Operations**

Lead IG Strategic Oversight Areas

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Military Operations and Security Cooperation focuses on determining the degree to which the contingency operation is accomplishing its security mission. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Conducting unilateral and partnered counterterrorism operations
- Providing security assistance
- Training and equipping partner security forces
- Advising, assisting, and enabling partner security forces
- Advising and assisting ministry-level security officials

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, Development, and Reconstruction focuses on some of the root causes of violent extremism. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Countering and reducing corruption, social inequality, and extremism
- Promoting inclusive and effective democracy, civil participation, and empowerment of women
- Promoting reconciliation, peaceful conflict resolution, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces, and other rule of law efforts
- Providing food, water, medical care, emergency relief, and shelter to people affected by crisis
- Assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and refugees
- Building or enhancing host-nation governance capacity
- Supporting sustainable and appropriate recovery and reconstruction activities, repairing infrastructure, removing explosive remnants of war, and reestablishing utilities and other public services
- Countering trafficking in persons and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

SUPPORT TO MISSION

Support to Mission focuses on U.S. administrative, logistical, and management efforts that enable military operations and non-military programs. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Ensuring the security of U.S. Government personnel and property
- Providing for the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Administering U.S. Government programs
- Managing U.S. Government grants and contracts
- Inventorying and accounting for equipment

AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies use dedicated, rotational, and temporary employees, as well as contractors, to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and provide consolidated planning and reporting on the status of overseas contingency operations.

The COVID-19 global pandemic continued to affect the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight of projects related to overseas contingency operations. In response to travel restrictions, the Lead IG agencies either delayed or deferred some oversight projects or revised or narrowed the scope of ongoing work. The Lead IG agencies continued to conduct oversight work while teleworking and practicing social distancing.

Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, oversight staff from the Lead IG agencies stationed in field offices in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Germany, as well as from the United States, would travel to locations in the region to conduct fieldwork for their projects.

The DoD OIG closed field offices in Afghanistan during the quarter because of the U.S. withdrawal and retrograde of U.S. forces and equipment. However, DoD OIG oversight and investigative staff maintained their presence in Germany, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

The DoS OIG maintained its presence at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul until April 29, when the DoS placed the embassy on ordered departure. DoS OIG personnel continued to perform their oversight duties from outside Afghanistan while awaiting the authorization to return to Kabul. DoS OIG staff stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, primarily worked from home due to COVID-19 precautions. As of early July, USAID OIG no longer assigns employees to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, but it will continue to provide oversight coverage from its Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand, and from Washington, D.C.

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 15 reports related to OFS during the quarter. These reports examined various oversight activities that support OFS, including the effectiveness of U.S. Central Command's (USCENTCOM) target development and post-strike civilian casualty assessment activities and combatant commands' counter threat finance activities; DoS Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations fire protection processes for DoS facilities; the DoS Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative; and USAID processes to prevent, detect and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse allegations.

As of June 30, 2021, 39 projects related to OFS were ongoing and 12 projects related to OFS were planned.

Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Evaluation of Kinetic Targeting and Civilian Casualty Reporting in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility

DoDIG -2021-084; May 18, 2021

The DoD OIG conducted this evaluation to determine the effectiveness of USCENTCOM's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities. The report is classified.

Evaluation of Combatant Command Counter Threat Finance Activities

DoDIG-2021-082; May 18, 2021

The DoD OIG conducted this evaluation to determine whether U.S. Africa Command, USCENTCOM, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command are planning and executing counter threat finance activities to impact adversaries' ability to use financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests. The report is classified.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL***Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Fire Protection***

ISP-I-21-22; May 19, 2021

The DoS OIG conducted this inspection to evaluate whether the DoS, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Directorate of Operations, Office of Fire Protection (OBO/FIRE) effectively directed and monitored overseas posts' compliance with the DoS fire protection program; and to review OBO/FIRE's inspection, safety, and prevention programs OBO/FIRE manages and directs the fire protection program for the DoS's overseas posts and residences, including the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

The DoS OIG found that while OBO/FIRE generally carried out its mission to prevent fire-related fatalities and injuries, OBO/FIRE reported that there had been three fatalities and five injuries in DoS-managed facilities overseas from FY 2006 to FY 2020. The DoS OIG found that limitations in a Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations database impeded OBO/FIRE's ability to fully monitor overseas posts' compliance with the requirements of its high-rise building mitigation program.

The DoS OIG made eight recommendations in this report, all to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations concurred with all eight recommendations and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management

ISP-I-21-21; April 22, 2021

The DoS OIG conducted this inspection to determine whether the DoS OBO, Directorate of Operations, Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management (SHEM) effectively managed overseas posts' compliance with DoS safety, occupational health, and environmental management requirements; and review OBO/SHEM workplace, residential, and motor vehicle safety programs.

OBO/SHEM oversees and directs the DoS program to promote safe and healthy living and working conditions for DoS employees located at overseas posts and residences. Among other things, OBO/SHEM's safety program covers the more than 2,400 residences on the compound at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and the nearly 1,500 residences on the compound at U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

The DoS OIG found that while OBO/SHEM had made progress in reducing safety risks to DoS employees and family members from 2014 to 2020, OBO/SHEM reported 6,214 accidents that resulted in 65 fatalities, 442 hospitalizations, 27,983 lost workdays, and \$26.1 million in property damage. Moreover, the DoS OIG found that 93 percent of the DoS's nearly 300 overseas posts had not fully completed or entered a safety certification for all residences in OBO/SHEM's database, as required by DoS regulations. For the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, of the 1,499 residences, 1,494 residential certificates (99.7 percent) were not current. For the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, residential certificates for all 2,412 residences were expired.

The DoS OIG made 11 recommendations to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, which concurred with 10 recommendations and neither agreed nor disagreed with the remaining recommendation. The DoS OIG considered all 11 recommendations resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Review of the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative

ISP-I-21-24; April 20, 2021

The DoS OIG conducted this inspection of the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative (PDSI) to assess program leadership; survey public diplomacy officers to assess the clarity, progress, and results of the program in the field; and to review coordination and communication among stakeholders.

The DoS Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources (R/PPR) launched the PDSI in 2014 to update the position descriptions for the approximately 2,600 locally employed staff positions in the public diplomacy sections of 186 DoS overseas missions, including the U.S. missions to Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of the position descriptions for these employees had not been significantly updated since the 1970s. Public diplomacy is the function of advancing U.S. national interests by seeking to engage, understand, and inform the perspectives of foreign audiences. As of October 2020, 36 of the 186 overseas missions (19 percent) had fully implemented the PDSI.

The DoS OIG found that while R/PPR made efforts to modify procedures and implement lessons learned from the first few years of PDSI implementation, deficiencies in 1) senior leadership involvement, 2) project management, 3) resource planning, 4) communication between R/PPR and stakeholders, and 5) training continued to hamper the implementation of the PDSI.

The DoS OIG made six recommendations in this report. R/PPR concurred with all six recommendations and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Closeout Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of International Finance Corporation, Afghanistan Investment Climate Reform Program***

8-306-21-034-N; June 9, 2021

USAID OIG contracted a financial closeout audit of the USAID-funded Afghanistan Investment Climate Reform Program managed by International Finance Corporation in Afghanistan from March 27, 2015, to March 26, 2020. The audit found that the International Finance Corporation refused to provide audit documents and information and failed to comply with USAID's demand for an audit of the program. As a result, the audit questioned the entire award incurred and billed expenses in the amount of \$6,851,149. USAID OIG made one recommendation, that USAID identify any unsupported costs associated with the award, and recover any amount that is unallowable.

Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of FHI 360 Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan

8-306-21-033-N; June 2, 2021

USAID OIG contracted an audit to express an opinion on whether the fund accountability statement for the period audited was presented fairly, to evaluate the auditee's internal controls, and to determine whether the auditee complied with the award terms and applicable laws and regulations. The audit covered \$17,576,701 for the period from October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2020. The audit identified \$34,447 in ineligible questioned costs, and two material instances of non-compliance. USAID OIG made two recommendations: to determine the allowability of \$34,447 in ineligible questions costs, and to verify that the implementer corrects two material instances of noncompliance.

USAID Adapted to Continue Program Monitoring During COVID-19, but Effectiveness of These Efforts is Still to Be Determined

9-000-21-007-P; May 21, 2021

USAID OIG conducted this audit to identify the impact of COVID-19 on USAID missions' capacity to monitor programs; and the steps USAID has taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on program monitoring.

The emergence of COVID-19 and the resulting pandemic led to USAID taking public health and safety measures, such as authorizing the return of U.S. Government personnel to the United States and providing maximum telework flexibilities across USAID missions, including in Afghanistan.

The audit found that USAID's global bureaus and selected missions cited challenges to program monitoring efforts, including movement restrictions and technology issues. Due to pandemic limitations, the effectiveness of USAID at monitoring and ensuring program performance is unknown. However, future program evaluations and independent financial and performance audits will likely determine program effectiveness. USAID OIG did not make recommendations.

Financial Audit of Costs Incurred by Management Systems International, Inc., Under the Afghanistan Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Activity Program

8-306-21-031-N; May 20, 2021

USAID OIG contracted an audit to examine the costs incurred by Management Systems International, under the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Activity program in Afghanistan for the period from March 13, 2019, to June 30, 2020. The audit firm concluded that the fund accountability statement presented program revenues and costs incurred under the award fairly, and did not identify any questioned costs.

Closeout Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Internews Network Inc., RASANA (Media) Program in Afghanistan

8-306-21-030-N, May 20, 2021

USAID OIG contracted an audit to examine the costs incurred by Internews Network Inc., from January 1, 2019, to March 28, 2020, and covered \$4,104,436. The audit questioned \$66,848 in ineligible and unsupported funds and identified two material internal control weaknesses. The audit also identified one material instance of non-compliance. USAID OIG made one recommendation to determine the allowability of the \$66,848 in questioned costs and recover any amount that is unallowable.

USAID Should Implement Additional Controls to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries

9-000-21-006-P; May 12, 2021

USAID OIG conducted this audit to determine the extent to which USAID has taken action to prevent and detect sexual exploitation and abuse, and the effectiveness of USAID's process for responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Sexual exploitation and abuse has been a longstanding problem in the foreign aid sector given the inherent power disparity between aid workers and beneficiaries. After recent sexual abuse scandals in the international development sector came to light in February 2018, USAID began to ensure that sufficient safeguards were in place to protect beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse by employees of implementers receiving USAID funding. USAID's efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse are applied in countries receiving USAID assistance, including Afghanistan.

USAID OIG determined that USAID had established a zero-tolerance stance on sexual exploitation and abuse and an intra-agency alliance focused on sexual misconduct. USAID OIG found that USAID had also strengthened its policies and identified process improvements to address sexual exploitation and abuse. However, USAID OIG also found that there were gaps in the approach for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in USAID's award and monitoring processes. USAID did not require key pre-award sexual exploitation and abuse measures across all awards, which led to variances across acquisition and assistance awards as well as humanitarian and development assistance.

Additionally, USAID did not monitor implementers' efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, as it did not have requirements and guidance in place to continuously monitor the design and effectiveness of implementers' sexual exploitation and abuse prevention measures. USAID OIG found that USAID also lacked clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a centralized tracking mechanism for responding to and managing sexual exploitation and abuse allegations.

USAID OIG made nine recommendations to improve USAID's processes and procedures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries. Based on management's comments in response to the draft report, all recommendations were considered resolved but open, pending completion of planned activities.

Audit of Fund Accountability Statement of The Asia Foundation Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan

8-306-21-024-N, April 22, 2021

USAID OIG contracted an audit to examine the costs incurred by The Asia Foundation for \$11,806,991 for the period from October 1, 2018, to March 31, 2020. The audit identified \$66,509 in questioned costs and identified two instances of material non-compliance. USAID OIG made two recommendations: to determine the allowability of \$66,509 in questioned costs and recover any amount that is unallowable; and to verify that The Asia Foundation corrects the two instances of material non-compliance.

Examination of Costs Claimed by International Relief & Development for Fiscal Year 2016

3-000-21-033-I; April 16, 2021

The USAID Office of Acquisition and Assistance, Cost, Audit and Support Division contracted an audit to conduct an examination of International Relief & Development (IRD) contracts and subcontracts for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016. The examination's objective was to express an opinion on whether incurred costs of \$9,851,693 claimed by IRD on contracts and subcontracts for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016, are allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with award terms and applicable laws and regulations. IRD expenditures included financial assistance awards in Afghanistan. The audit concluded that the majority costs claimed by IRD on contracts and subcontracts during the period complied with contract terms pertaining to accumulating and billing incurred amounts with the exception of \$1,404 in general and administrative pool costs. The audit did not disclose any findings that are required to be reported under generally accepted government auditing standards.

Final Reports by Partner Agencies

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

BJR: Afghanistan Security Forces Fund Execution

104616; April 21, 2021

The GAO conducted this evaluation to review 1) how much has been appropriated for Afghanistan Security Forces Funds (ASFF) since the fund's inception in 2005; 2) to what extent ASFF funds remain unobligated, and how that compares with obligations since the fund's inception in 2005; and 3) to what extent ASFF funds have been cancelled since the fund's inception in 2005. The report is classified.

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

Kabul National Military Hospital: Installation of New Elevators and Dumbwaiters Generally Met Contract Requirements, but a Construction Deficiency and Inadequate Maintenance Could Affect Operations

SIGAR 21-32 IR; April 14, 2021

SIGAR conducted this inspection of the Kabul National Military Hospital to assess whether construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and the elevator system is being used and properly maintained.

In 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$4.02 million contract to Macro Vantage Levant, a United Arab Emirates company, to remove and replace 13 elevators and 3 dumbwaiters at the hospital, and to make improvements in supplying power to the new elevators. SIGAR conducted its inspection in September 2020.

SIGAR determined that Macro Vantage Levant generally replaced the new elevators and dumbwaiters according to contract requirements. However, the inspectors found a construction deficiency involving three elevators with a lower weight carrying capacity than the contract required, which could affect hospital operations.

SIGAR made two recommendations. First, that the Commander of the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) notify the Afghan Ministry of Defense to address the construction deficiency and maintenance issues. Second, that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seek recovery of a \$31,376 cost difference also identified in the report, related to the installation of three lower capacity elevators.

Management agreed with the recommendations.

Ongoing Oversight Activities

As of June 30, 2021, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 39 ongoing projects related to OFS. Figure 5 describes the ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 2 and 3, contained in Appendix C, list the title and objective for each of these projects. The following sections highlight some of these ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

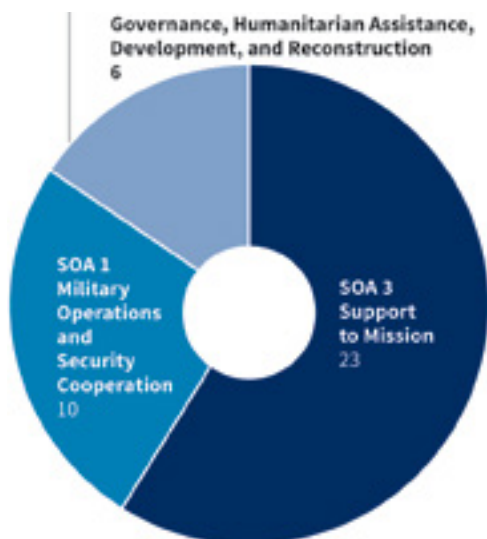
- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an evaluation to determine whether USCENTCOM properly screened, documented, and tracked DoD Service members suspected of sustaining a traumatic brain injury to determine whether a return to duty status for current operations was acceptable or evacuation and additional care was required.
- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an evaluation to determine whether combatant commands developed and implemented programs in accordance with requirements intended to reduce potential law of war violations during operations.
- **SIGAR** is conducting an audit to determine whether DoD-funded efforts to recruit, train, and retain women in the ANDSF have been successful.

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine the extent to which USAID has designated high priority countries and allocated water access, sanitation, and hygiene funding based on U.S. legislation.

Figure 5.

Ongoing Projects by Strategic Oversight Area



SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an evaluation to determine how USCENTCOM executed its COVID-19 pandemic response, and to identify any impact to operations resulting from the pandemic.
- The **DoS OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the DoS followed acquisition policy in awarding noncompetitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine the effectiveness of USAID's procedures for guiding acquisition award terminations.

Planned Oversight Projects

As of June 30, 2021, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 12 planned projects related to OFS. Figure 6 identifies the number of planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 4 and 5, contained in Appendix D, list the titles and objectives for each of these projects. The following sections highlight some of these planned projects by strategic oversight area.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an evaluation to determine whether the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is collecting, analyzing, and distributing geospatial intelligence in support of combatant command overseas contingency operations' intelligence requirements in accordance with law and DoD policy and guidance.
- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the Army provided oversight of DoD interpreter and translator contractors in Afghanistan and to ensure the contractors fulfilled requirements.
- **SIGAR** intends to conduct an audit to determine the extent to which the DoD and ANDSF ensured the proper storage, maintenance, and usage of medical supplies and equipment.

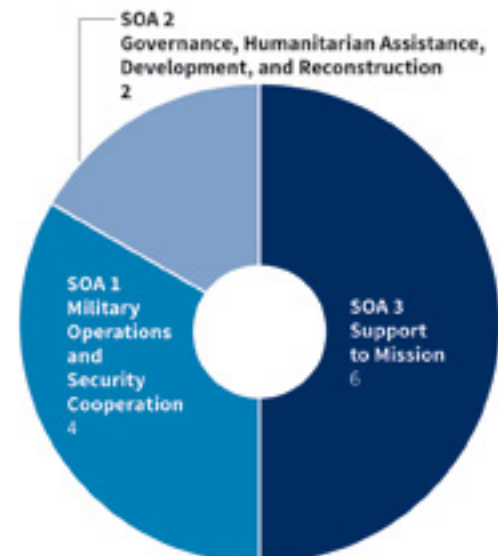
GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

- **USAID OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine the extent to which USAID's anticorruption efforts in Afghanistan are integrated into USAID activities, and how USAID responds to information about fraud that could affect its programs.
- **SIGAR** intends to conduct an inspection of electrical infrastructure construction at the Afghan National Army's Marshal Fahim National Defense University at Camp Commando, to determine whether construction was completed according to contract requirements and whether the facility is being used and maintained.

SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the DoD effectively monitored contractor performance for the National Maintenance Strategy-Ground Vehicle Systems contract.
- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the DoD, Military Services, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service accurately calculated hostile fire pay/imminent danger pay, family separation allowances, and combat zone tax exclusions for combat zone deployments.
- **SIGAR** intends to conduct an audit of the Afghan Special Security Forces Training Program to determine whether the contractor is meeting training and advising requirements.

Figure 6.
Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area



INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

Investigations

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to OFS during the quarter.

With the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS, the DoD OIG's criminal investigative component) and investigative components of other Lead IG agencies have closed their offices in Afghanistan. However, Lead IG investigators are working on OFS-related cases from offices in Germany, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United States.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO OFS

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in six criminal charges and two convictions. Those actions are discussed below.

The investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 4 investigations, initiated 3 new investigations, and coordinated on 69 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, program irregularities, and human trafficking allegations.

The Lead IG agencies and partner agencies continue to coordinate their investigative efforts through the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group, which consists of representatives from DCIS, the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 7 fraud awareness briefings for 25 attendees. The dashboard on page 66 depicts activities of the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group.

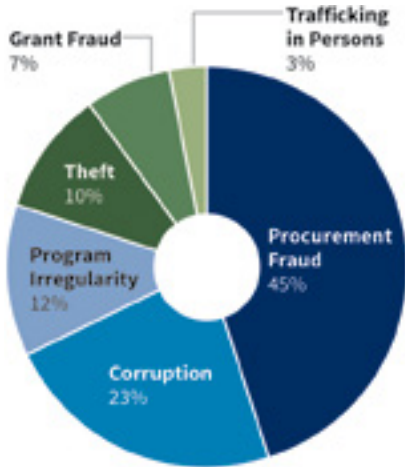
SIX RECRUITERS INDICTED FOR HIRING ALLEGEDLY UNQUALIFIED LINGUISTS TO SUPPORT U.S. FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

On April 22, a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Virginia indicted six former U.S. Government contractor employees on wire fraud charges related to a \$700 million contract used to recruit and deploy qualified linguists to support military operations in Afghanistan.

According to court documents, Mezghan N. Anwari, 41, of Centerville, Virginia, Abdul Q. Latifi, 45, of Irvine, California, Mahjoba Raofi, 47, of San Diego, California, Laila Anwari, 54, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, Rafi M. Anwari, 54, of Centerville, Virginia, and Zarghona Alizai, 48, of Annandale, Virginia, were employed as linguist recruiters for an Arlington, Virginia-based government contractor. The indictment alleges that the defendants knowingly recruited linguists who lacked the minimum language proficiency specified in the contract. The defendants arranged for more capable linguists to fraudulently impersonate the unqualified linguist candidates during oral proficiency interviews so as to ensure they would receive passing scores. As a result, military forces—to include those serving in combat zones—received inadequate translation services.

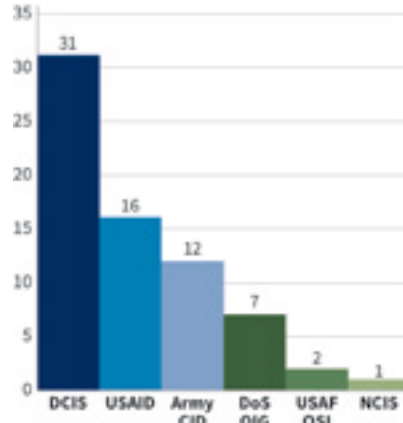
ACTIVITY BY FRAUD AND CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIVE WORKING GROUP

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL
As of June 30, 2021

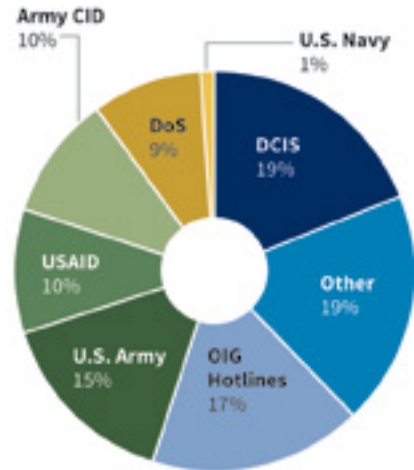


OPEN INVESTIGATIONS*
69

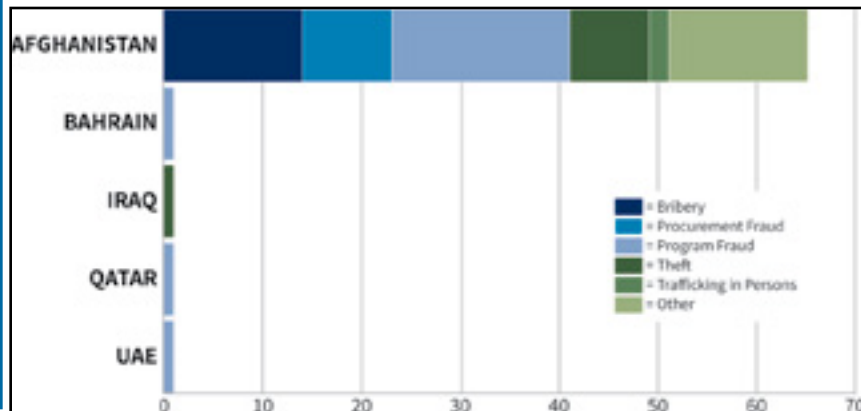
OPEN INVESTIGATIONS BY WORKING GROUP MEMBER*



SOURCES OF ALLEGATIONS



PRIMARY OFFENSE LOCATIONS



Q3 FY 2021 ACTIVITY

Cases Opened	3
Cases Closed	4

Q3 FY 2021 BRIEFINGS

Briefings Held	7
Briefing Attendees	25

Q3 FY 2021 RESULTS

Arrests	—
Criminal Charges	6
Criminal Convictions	2
Fines/Recoveries	—
Suspensions	—
Debarments	—
Personnel Actions	—
Administrative Actions	—

* Some investigations are joint with more than one agency and some not joint with any other agency. Therefore, the total number of Joint Open Cases may not equal the total number of Open Cases. Open Cases as of 6/30/2021.

This matter was investigated by DCIS, SIGAR, and Army CID. In June, a judge in federal court in Alexandria dismissed the case, but the U.S. Attorney has filed an appeal of that decision.

TENNESSEE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER PLEADED GUILTY TO THEFT

On May 12, a Tennessee Army National Guardsman pleaded guilty to a theft charge in the U.S. Western District of Tennessee Eastern Division. Michael Jason McCaslin used his position as a supply sergeant to steal government equipment intended for use by the U.S. military in Afghanistan. The value of the stolen property exceeded \$1,000. The sentencing hearing for McCaslin was scheduled for August 12, 2021.

This matter was investigated by DCIS and Army CID.

CALIFORNIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SCHEME TO DEFRAUD AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ON U.S. FUNDED CONTRACT

A California man pleaded guilty on April 28 for his role in a scheme to defraud the Afghan government of over \$100 million.

The funds were provided to Afghanistan by USAID for the purpose of constructing an electric grid, in connection with the long-standing U.S. effort to strengthen Afghanistan's basic infrastructure.

According to court documents, Saed Ismail Amiri, 38, of Granite Bay, CA, was at various times either the owner or senior consultant of Assist Consultants Incorporated (ACI), an Afghan company that had received over \$250 million in U.S. funded contracts since 2013.

In 2015 and 2016, Amiri, ACI employees, and others engaged in a scheme to win a U.S. Government-funded contract to construct five electric power substations for the national power utility of Afghanistan, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), to connect Afghanistan's Northeastern and Southeastern electric grid systems. Specifically, Amiri, ACI employees, and others submitted false work history and fraudulent supporting documents in an effort to deceive DABS into believing that ACI met the required contract criteria.

In July 2015, ACI submitted a bid on the contract for \$112,292,241.05, underbidding its competitors by more than \$20 million. ACI's bid submission claimed the company had worked as a subcontractor to a prime contractor on two 220 kilovolt substations for a cement factory in Uganda and a textile company in Nigeria. In fact, the alleged prime contractor was a fictitious company that ACI had invented and controlled. ACI had never worked on a substation project in Africa, and neither the Ugandan cement factory nor the Nigerian textile company existed.

Amiri pleaded guilty to wire fraud. He was scheduled to be sentenced at a date to be determined.

This matter was investigated by USAID OIG and SIGAR.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO LEGACY CASES

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies have 25 ongoing “legacy” investigations related to crimes involving the OFS area of operations that occurred prior to the designation of OFS.

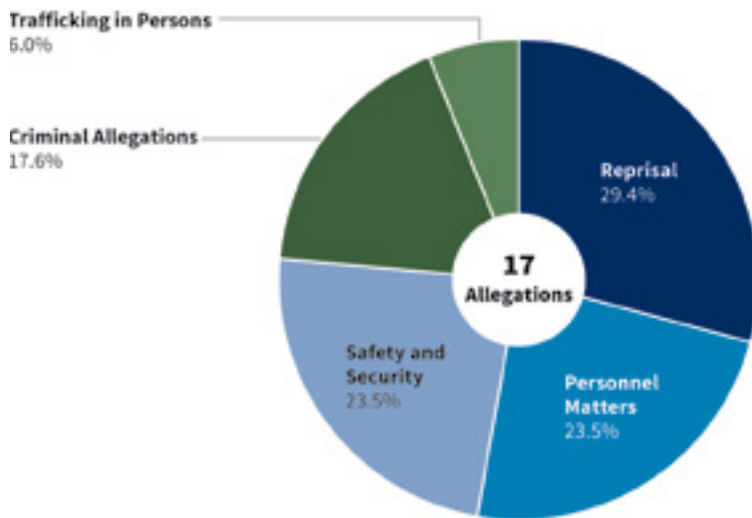
Hotline

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. A DoD OIG Hotline investigator coordinates among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. During the quarter, the DoD OIG hotline investigator received 17 allegations and referred 10 cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations. In some instances, it is possible for multiple cases to be referred to different Lead IG and other investigative agencies for the same allegations.

As noted in Figure 7, the majority of the allegations during the reporting period were related to reprisal, security, and personnel matters.

Figure 7.

Hotline Activities









Aerial porters work with maintainers to load a CH-47 Chinook into a C-17 Globemaster III. (U.S. Army photo)

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APPENDIX A

Classified Appendix to this Report

A classified appendix to this report provides additional information on Operation Freedom's Sentinel, as noted in several sections of this report. The appendix will be delivered to relevant agencies and congressional committees. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DoS and USAID OIGs did not provide information for or participate in the preparation of the classified appendix.

APPENDIX B

Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report

This report complies with section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, which requires that the designated Lead IG provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on each overseas contingency operation, and is consistent with the requirement that a biannual report be published by the Lead IG on the activities of the Inspectors General with respect to that overseas contingency operation. The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Freedom's Sentinel. The DoS IG is the Associate IG for the operation.

This report covers the period from April 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021. The three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG—and partner oversight agencies contributed the content of this report.

To fulfill the congressional mandate to report on OFS, the Lead IG agencies gather data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, investigations, and evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the information collected through open-source research or from Federal agencies, and the information provided represents the view of the source cited in each instance.

INFORMATION COLLECTION FROM AGENCIES AND OPEN SOURCES

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies gather information from the DoD, DoS, USAID, and other Federal agencies about their programs and operations related to OFS. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly reporting and oversight planning.

This report also draws on current, publicly available information from reputable sources. Sources used in this report may include the following:

- U.S. Government statements, press conferences, and reports
- Reports issued by international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and think tanks
- Media reports

The Lead IG agencies use open-source information to assess information obtained through their agency information collection process and provide additional detail about the operation.

REPORT PRODUCTION

The DoD IG, as the Lead IG for this operation, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, the DoS OIG, and USAID OIG draft the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies and then participate in the editing of the entire report. Once the report is assembled, each OIG coordinates a two-phase review process within its own agency. During the first review, the Lead IG agencies ask relevant offices within their agencies to comment, correct inaccuracies, and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG agencies incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and send the report back to the agencies for a second review prior to publication. The final report reflects the editorial view of the DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG as independent oversight agencies.

APPENDIX C

Ongoing Oversight Projects

Tables 2 and 3 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects related to OFS.

Table 2.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OFS by Lead IG Agencies, as of June 30, 2021

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Entitlements and Allowances for Processing for Military Service Reserve Deployments

To determine whether the deployment process resulted in accurate and timely entitlements and allowances for deployed members of the Military Service Reserves.

Evaluation of Traumatic Brain Injury Screening in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility

To determine whether U.S. Central Command properly screened, documented, and tracked DoD Service members suspected of sustaining a traumatic brain injury to determine whether a return to duty status for current operations was acceptable, or evacuation and additional care was required.

Followup Audit of Army Oversight of Logistics Civil Augmentation Program IV Government-Furnished Property in Afghanistan

To determine whether the Army implemented the recommendations identified in DODIG-2018-040, "Army Oversight of Logistics Civil Augmentation Program Government-Furnished Property in Afghanistan," December 11, 2017, to improve the accountability of government-furnished property.

Evaluation of U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command Implementation of DoD's Law of War Program

To determine 1) the extent to which USCENTCOM and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) developed and implemented programs in accordance with DoD Law of War requirements in order to reduce potential law of war violations when conducting operations, and 2) whether potential USCENTCOM and USSOCOM law of war violations were reported and reviewed in accordance with DoD policy.

Audit of DoD Implementation of the DoD Coronavirus Disease-2019 Vaccine Distribution Plan

To determine whether DoD officials effectively distributed and administered coronavirus disease-2019 vaccines to DoD's workforce in accordance with DoD guidance.

Audit of the Defense Logistics Agency Award and Management of Fuel Contracts in Areas of Contingency Operations

To determine whether 1) Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Energy personnel awarded and met requirements for fuel requirements, in areas of contingency operations, as required by federal and DoD guidance; and 2) to determine whether the DLA has processes in place to ensure contractors are meeting contractual obligations and following anticorruption practices.

Audit of Tracking, Recovery, and Reuse of DoD-Owned Shipping Containers

To determine to what extent the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps complied with DoD requirements to 1) track, recover, and reuse DoD-owned shipping containers and 2) include those containers in an accountable property system of record.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Use of Non-Competitive Contracts in Support of Overseas Contingency Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq

To determine 1) whether acquisition policy was followed in awarding noncompetitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq; and 2) whether, in awarding the noncompetitive contracts, the justifications for doing so met the criteria specified in the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Competition in Contracting Act.

Audit of Selected Grants and Cooperative Agreements Administered by the Public Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan

To determine whether selected grants and cooperative agreements administered by the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul have been executed in accordance with Federal and DoS requirements.

Audit of the Department of State's Use of Unfinalized Contract Actions

To determine whether the DoS Office of Acquisitions Management met Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements and DoS guidelines for issuing contract actions for which performance begins before the contract terms and conditions are finalized, and whether fees or profits were paid to contractors during the period after performance began but before the contract terms and conditions were finalized.

Inspection of the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisitions Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division

To 1) evaluate how the Office of Acquisition Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division uses funds received through a security contract surcharge to provide overall support to the Diplomatic Security program office for the administration of overseas local guard force contracts; and 2) assess the Office of Acquisition Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division's timeliness in executing contract awards and modifications.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of USAID's Contract Termination Practices

To determine the effectiveness of USAID's procedures for guiding acquisition award terminations.

Audit of the USAID Compliance with the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014

To determine the extent to which USAID has designated high priority countries and allocated water access, sanitation, and hygiene funding based on the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014.



Table 3.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OFS by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2021**AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY*****Installation Access Controls***

To determine whether personnel manage installation access controls in accordance with guidance. Specifically, evaluate Integrated defense plans; antiterrorism program; and access procedures at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

Confined Spaces

To determine whether Air Force personnel identified and classified all confined spaces and complied with entry requirements at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

Area of Responsibility Dining Facility Operations

To determine whether Air Force personnel managed overseas contingency operations Area of Responsibility dining facility operations to account for food inventories and food service equipment; provide food services in accordance with health and safety standards; and administer and execute food service contracts at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

Government Purchase Card Management

To determine whether U.S. Air Force Central Command personnel authorized and documented contingency operations Government Purchase Card transactions in accordance with guidance and received services and accounted for assets purchased with Government Purchase Card transactions at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

ARMY AUDIT AGENCY***Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement Accountability***

To determine whether the Army had processes in place to accurately record acquisition and cross-servicing agreement orders in Afghanistan.

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION***Inspection of Afghan National Army Afghan Electrical Interconnect Electrical Infrastructure Pol-i-Charkhi***

To determine whether 1) construction of Afghan National Army Afghan Electrical Interconnect Electrical Infrastructure Pol-i-Charkhi was completed in accordance with contract requirements and technical specifications; and 2) the facility is being used and properly maintained.

Inspection of the Afghan National Army's 8th Special Operations Kandak Facility Upgrades at Forward Operating Base Shank

To assess whether 1) the design and construction of facility upgrades at Afghan National Army's 8th Special Operations Kandak Facility Upgrades at Forward Operating Base Shank was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and 2) facilities are being used as intended and maintained properly.

Audit of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan's Use of Conditionality

To examine Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan's use and enforcement of conditionality to improve accountability and transparency in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.

DoD Use of Funds Appropriated to Recruit and Retain Women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces

To 1) identify the initiatives and incentives DoD funded to fulfill National Defense Authorization Act requirements and promote recruitment, training, and retention of women in the ANDSF; 2) assess the DoD's processes and procedures to select the initiatives and incentives it funded to promote the recruitment, training, and retention of women in the ANDSF for compliance with regulations and goals; 3) assess the extent to which the DoD measured the results of its initiatives and incentives to promote the recruitment, training, and retention of women in the ANDSF; and 4) assess the extent to which the DoD's initiatives and incentives to support the recruitment, training, and retention of women in the ANDSF met their goals

Inspection of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police Northern Electrical Interconnect Expansion Project in Kunduz

To determine whether 1) the design and construction of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police Northern Electrical Interconnect Expansion Project in Kunduz was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and 2) the resulting product is being used and properly maintained.

Inspection of the Afghan National Army's Northeastern Electrical Interconnect Power System in Dashti Shadian

To 1) inspect the Naiabad substation expansion and the construction of the new substation at Camp Shaheen; and 2) assess whether the work was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and 3) determine whether the power system is being used and properly maintained.

Inspection of Afghan National Army Ministry of Defense Headquarters Infrastructure & Security Improvements

To assess whether 1) the design and construction of Afghan National Army Ministry of Defense Headquarters Infrastructure & Security Improvements was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and 2) the project is being used and properly maintained.

Audit of the Afghan National Army-Territorial Force (ANA-TF)

To determine the extent to which 1) the DoD evaluated and implemented the ANA-TF program in accordance with applicable guidance; 2) the DoD support has helped enable the ANA-TF to operate as intended; and 3) the DoD and the Afghan government have taken steps to develop a sustainable ANA-TF.

U.S. Accountability for Fuel Provisions to the Government of Afghanistan's Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Interior Affairs (Mol)

To determine the extent to which the DoD has, since April 2018, 1) acted upon SIGAR's recommendations to review and assess fuel accountability, including coordinating with the MoD and Mol; and 2) planned to ensure accountability and oversight for Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces fuel provisions in the future.

Vanquish Worldwide's National Afghan Trucking Contracts

To 1) assess the U.S. Army's oversight and management of contractor payments for the U.S. Army's National Afghan Trucking Services contract and 2) determine whether a specific contractor was appropriately paid for its services.

Financial Audit of Costs Incurred under DoD Awards for Afghanistan Reconstruction, PAE Government Services Inc.

To audit the maintenance and repair of Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces' vehicles and ground equipment; Award Number: W56HZV17C0117, for the period of 5/23/2017 to 8/30/2019; Obligation Amount: \$192,295,663.

Financial Audit of Costs Incurred under DoD Awards for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Engility Corporation

To audit the Law Enforcement Professionals Program; Award Number: W91CRB-13-C-0021, for the period of 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2020; Obligation Amount: \$22,035,442.

Audit of the Department of Defense's Efforts to Ensure the Accuracy of Afghan Personnel and Pay System Records and Accountability of Funds Provided to the Ministry of Defense

To determine the extent to which the DoD, since the beginning of FY 2019, has ensured 1) the accuracy and completeness of data used in APPS; and 2) that the funds it provides to the Afghan government to pay the MoD's salaries are disbursed to intended recipients.

Review of Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment Towers

To 1) identify what actions are being taken to develop Afghan equipment support capabilities for the Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment (RAID) tower platforms currently used by the Afghan National Army (ANA); 2) identify assessments of the effectiveness of current field service support and end-use monitoring mechanisms for the RAID systems, and the drawdown's effect on these mechanisms; and 3) assess what effects a drawdown of U.S. troops would have on the mission capability of the RAID towers currently deployed by the ANA.

DoD and Afghan Air Force Vetting for Corruption

To examine whether the DoD and the Ministry of Defense have developed plans, policies, and procedures that will help ensure that the Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing recruit, train, and retain qualified personnel that will result in a professional, credible, and sustainable Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing.

Audit of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Termination of Awards in Afghanistan

To determine 1) how many awards intended to support the reconstruction of Afghanistan made between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2020, USAID terminated prior to their completion, the reasons for any terminations, and the extent to which USAID terminated awards in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies; and 2) the extent to which award terminations had an effect on intended programmatic or strategic outcomes Afghanistan.

Audit of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Adherence to Guidance for Using Non-Competitive Contracts in Afghanistan

To determine 1) the type and number of USAID contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements for the reconstruction of Afghanistan have not been subject to competition; and 2) the extent to which USAID adhered to requirements when awarding noncompetitively awarded these contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Contracting

To examine the intersection of Monitoring and Evaluation and contracting practices to understand how agencies have used Monitoring and Evaluation to ensure accountability and promote positive program outcomes.

Policing and Detainee Operations

To examine how the Departments of Defense, State, Justice, and Homeland Security, as well as other entities, provided financial and technical support to Afghan personnel in Afghanistan and in the United States for the development of civil policing and corrections capabilities in Afghanistan.

Inspection of the Brishnakot and North-West Substation Expansions

To perform an inspection of the Brishnakot and North-West Substation Expansions and associated construction to determine whether the work was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and if the facilities are being used as intended and properly maintained.

Audit of U.S. Investment in Energy Projects in Afghanistan

To determine the 1) number of U.S.-funded projects completed since 2009, whose primary intended outcome was to increase and improve power generation, transmission, or distribution; 2) extent to which completed U.S.-funded projects resulted in intended outcomes and increased the electricity available to Afghan communities or other end users; and 3) extent to which Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) has the capacity to sustain U.S.-funded projects.



APPENDIX D

Planned Oversight Projects

Tables 4 and 5 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects related to OFS.

Table 4.

Planned Oversight Projects Related to OFS by Lead IG Agencies, as of June 30, 2021

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Department of Defense Military Payroll for Combat Zone Entitlements

To determine whether DoD military components and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service accurately calculated hostile fire pay, imminent danger pay, family separation allowance, and combat zone tax exclusion for combat zone deployments.

Audit of Depot-Level Maintenance for U.S. Military Heavy Lift Helicopters

To determine whether the depot-level maintenance for U.S. Military Heavy Lift Helicopters enabled the fleet to maintain required aircraft availability and readiness rates.

Audit of National Maintenance Strategy-Ground Vehicle Systems Contract Oversight

To determine whether Army Contracting Command monitored contractor performance for the National Maintenance Strategy-Ground Vehicle Systems contract to ensure the contractor effectively provided training, maintenance, and supply chain management support services to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.

Audit of the U.S. Army Central Modernized Enduring Equipment Set in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility

To determine whether the Army's implementation of the modernized enduring equipment sets in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, including in Afghanistan and Qatar in support of OFS, is meeting mission goals.

Evaluation of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in Support of Combatant Commands Overseas Contingency Operations' Intelligence Requirements

To determine whether the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is collecting, analyzing, and distributing geospatial intelligence in support of Combatant Commands' Overseas Contingency Operations intelligence requirements in accordance with law and DoD policy and guidance.

*Suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will resume when force health protection conditions permit.

Audit of Oversight of the Department of Defense Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II Contract in Afghanistan

To determine whether the Army provided effective oversight of DoD Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II contractors in Afghanistan to ensure the contractors fulfilled requirements.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the PAE Operations and Maintenance Contract at Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan

To determine whether the DoS is administering the PAE operations and maintenance contract in accordance with Federal and DoS requirements, and whether PAE is operating in accordance with the contract terms and conditions.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of USAID's Efforts to Fight Corruption, Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Afghanistan

To determine the extent to which anticorruption considerations are integrated into USAID activities and how the agency monitors and responds to information about fraud that could affect its programs.

Table 5.

Planned Oversight Projects Related to OFS by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2021**SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION*****Audit of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces Pharmaceutical, Medical, and Surgical Materials (Class VIII)***

To assess the extent to which the DoD and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces 1) developed and validated the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces pharmaceutical, medical, and surgical material needs; 2) provided needed pharmaceutical, medical, and surgical supplies in accordance with DoD and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces requirements; and 3) oversaw the proper storage, maintenance, and usage of supplies and equipment.

Audit of Afghan Special Security Forces–Training Program

To determine whether the Afghan Special Security Forces–Training Program (ASSF-TP) contractor is providing training and advising in accordance with contract requirements; and evaluate the progress of ASSF-TP in developing the ASSF elements in accordance with NATO, U.S., and Afghan plans.

Unmanned Vehicle Compromise

To examine DoD assistance or training to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to help ensure that compromised intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets are accounted for and/or disposed of properly.

Follow up on E-Payment System Usage

To determine the extent to which the e-payment system is being used in the customs revenue collection process; and what anticorruption controls have been put in place to increase customs revenue collection and the effectiveness of those controls.



ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AAF	Afghan Air Force
AFIAT	Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
ANP	Afghan National Police
BHA	USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
COVID-19	coronavirus disease–2019
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
FY	fiscal year
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IG	Inspector General
INL	DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISIS-K	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General
Lead IG agencies	DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG
MoD	Ministry of Defense

Acronym	
MoI	Ministry of Interior Affairs
MRAP	Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCO	overseas contingency operation
OEG	USAID Office of Economic Growth
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OTI	USAID Office of Transition Initiatives
OUSDP(P)	Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
TAA	train, advise, and assist
TAAC-Air	Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Air
UHI	Urban Health Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USFOR–A	United States Forces–Afghanistan
WFP	UN World Food Programme





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A U.S. Navy aircraft maintenance technician attaches a hoist to an MH-60R Sea Hawk engine aboard a guided-missile cruiser during operations in the Arabian Sea. (U.S. Navy photo)

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