OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

JULY 1, 2020–SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

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 on 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 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 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 security forces.

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of OFS, as well as the work of the DoD, the DoS, and USAID to promote the U.S. Government's policy goals in Afghanistan, during the period July 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020.

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 agencies issued seven audit, inspection, and evaluation reports related to OFS.

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

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Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

Matthew S. Klimow
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Ann Calvaresi Barr
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On the Cover

(Top row): A U.S. Air Force F-35 Lightning II flies over the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (U.S. Air Force photo); Afghan National Army solders prepare for a ceremony during a visit from Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley (DoD photo); The United States transfers four A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to the Afghan Air Force (NATO photo); Members of an aeromedical evacuation squadron simulate transporting COVID-19 patients on a C-130 Hercules aircraft during training (U.S. Air Force photo). (Bottom row): The Afghan Peace Negotiations opening ceremony in Doha, Qatar, on September 12, 2020 (DoS 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). This quarter, the United States continued its gradual military drawdown in Afghanistan. The number of U.S. forces decreased steadily from approximately 8,600 troops at the beginning of the quarter, with a goal of having fewer than 5,000 in Afghanistan by November and achieving a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan by May 2021, if the Taliban upholds its commitments under the February U.S.-Taliban agreement.

It is unclear at this point whether the Taliban is upholding its commitments. While the Taliban has generally honored its obligation to cease attacks against U.S. forces and interests in Afghanistan, it is difficult to discern the extent to which it is meeting the requirement that Afghanistan not serve as a haven for terrorists who threaten the United States. Furthermore, the Taliban has escalated its attacks on Afghan forces, which threatens to derail the peace process between the Taliban and the Afghan government that began this quarter. The two sides continue to disagree on procedural aspects of the negotiations.

According to the agreement between the United States and the Taliban, all nondiplomatic U.S. personnel—military, civilian, and contractors—will leave Afghanistan by May 2021, 14 months after the U.S.-Taliban agreement was signed, if the Taliban honors the terms of the agreement. As the United States prepares to depart, the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to hinder efforts to build the Afghan defense forces and develop Afghan institutions. The U.S.-led coalition halted all face-to-face advising of Afghan forces in March to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and resumed limited in-person interactions in July. Without regular interactions with Afghan counterparts, the coalition was unable to continue training some hands-on skills such as vehicle and aircraft maintenance.

The U.S. Government also has a number of programs and contracts, such as vehicle maintenance, pilot training, and aviation fleet modernization, that currently extend well beyond the withdrawal date. Some of those programs will still be necessary to assist Afghanistan with its security and development, and how the contracts will be modified, implemented, and overseen is unclear.

Lead IG oversight remains critical to assess the effectiveness of U.S. support to Afghanistan. I look forward to working with my Lead IG colleagues to continue to report and provide oversight 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

EXIT
EXIT

Members of an aeromedical evacuation squadron simulate transporting COVID-19 patients on a C-130 Hercules aircraft during training. (U.S. Air Force photo)

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

THE QUARTER IN REVIEW 7

- Major Developments 8
- Measures of Security 13
- Capacity Building 18
- Diplomacy and Political Developments 27
- Development and Humanitarian Assistance 29
- Support to Mission 36

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES 41

- Strategic Planning 42
- Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Activity 44
- Investigations and Hotline Activity 54

APPENDICES 59

- APPENDIX A Classified Appendix to this Report 60
- APPENDIX B Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report 60
- APPENDIX C Ongoing OFS Oversight Projects 61
- APPENDIX D Planned OFS Oversight Projects 65
- Acronyms 68
- Map of Afghanistan 69
- Endnotes 70

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

Afghan Government and Taliban Begin Talks in Qatar

When the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement on February 29, 2020, to advance the peace process in Afghanistan, the Taliban agreed to enter into Afghan Peace Negotiations, with the goal of reaching a political settlement and discussing a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.[1] According to the U.S.-Taliban agreement, the Afghan Peace Negotiations were to have begun by March 10, 2020. However, talks were stalled for months due to disagreements between the Afghan government and the Taliban over when and how both sides should release prisoners.[2]

The DoS reported that U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad worked this quarter to support the start of the Afghan Peace Negotiations by traveling within the region to press the Afghan government and the Taliban to release a prescribed number of prisoners and reduce violence as confidence-building measures for the negotiations. Eventually, the Afghan government released more than 5,000 Taliban prisoners and the Taliban released approximately 1,000 Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) prisoners.[3]

The Afghan Peace Negotiations formally began on September 12 in Doha, Qatar, after months of delays.[4] The two sides agreed to most points during initial talks focused on procedural rules but reached an impasse on two points. First, the Taliban and the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team disagreed over the relationship of the talks to the U.S.-Taliban agreement and, second, they disagreed over the school of Islamic jurisprudence that would be used to resolve disputes between the two sides.[5]

The negotiation about the role of the relationship of the talks with the U.S.-Taliban agreement was further complicated by the fact that there were two separate two-party agreements announced in February, one between the United States and the Taliban, and the other between the United States and the Afghan government. According to media reports, the Taliban remained steadfast in its assertion that its agreement with the United States did not mean it was required to end hostilities with the Afghan government. As such, the Taliban refused to discuss the Afghan government's position of prioritizing a ceasefire. In addition, media reporting indicated that in relying on the U.S.-Taliban agreement as its reason to participate in Afghan Peace Negotiations, the Taliban believes it could break off negotiations if it decides the United States is not adhering to the U.S.-Taliban agreement.[6]

The Defense Intelligence Agency reported that the Afghan government was hesitant to barter away institutional gains like their form of government to implement a form of government in line with the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law.[7]

The Afghan Peace Negotiations opening ceremony in Doha, Qatar, on September 12, 2020. (DoS photo)

U.S. Drawdown Continues amid Escalating Taliban Violence against Afghan Forces

The United States continued to implement a conditions-based withdrawal of military and non-diplomatic civilian personnel from Afghanistan, one of its commitments under the U.S.-Taliban agreement.[8] The United States met its commitments to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan to 8,600 and withdraw from five bases in Afghanistan by July, according to the DoD.[9] The United States also committed to withdraw all remaining U.S. and coalition military forces by May 1, 2021, with the Taliban's "commitment [to] and action on" its obligations in the agreement.[10] Since July, the United States implemented further reductions of force levels, as then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper stated that the United States would

have fewer than 5,000 military members in Afghanistan by the end of November.[11] The DoD stated that once it reaches that number, it will pause troop reductions and assess the situation.[12]

As the U.S. drawdown continued, the Taliban largely refrained from conducting attacks targeting U.S. or coalition forces. United States Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A) reported last quarter that the Taliban did not initiate any attacks against the U.S. or coalition.[13] This quarter, the Taliban mostly continued this restraint but initiated a small number of attacks. The United States did not preemptively target the Taliban, but did conduct targeted strikes to defend ANDSF units under attack.[14]

Although the Taliban conducted few attacks on coalition forces this quarter, the number of enemy-initiated attacks increased this quarter as fighting between the ANDSF and Taliban increased, according to USFOR-A.[15] The violence led Ambassador Khalilzad to warn that "distressingly high" levels of violence could threaten the peace agreement.[16]

Advising of Afghan Forces Conducted Remotely amid Pandemic

The coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic affected how the NATO-led coalition conducted its advising mission this quarter. In March, the coalition eliminated all face-to-face advising to reduce the risk of spreading the disease between coalition members and their Afghan counterparts. Instead, advisors used email and electronic communication tools to work remotely with their counterparts.[17] In July, the coalition resumed some in-person advising, although only in limited circumstances.[18]

USAID implementers provide a demonstration to train healthcare workers in using U.S.-provided ventilators. (Jhpiego photo)

Lead IG Oversight Activities

This quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed seven reports related to OFS. These reports included oversight of whether military services properly stored, tracked, and safeguarded pharmaceuticals; the Air Force's oversight and management of a contract to support remotely piloted aircraft, including those deployed to Afghanistan; and DoS procedures, guidance, and best practices in its approach to adjust the size and composition of Missions Afghanistan and Iraq. As of September 30, 2020, 35 projects related to OFS were ongoing and 21 projects related to OFS were planned.

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 laws, rules, or regulations; 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 71 cases to Lead IG agencies or other investigative organizations.

The Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) reported that advising efforts focused on high-level projects to improve security institutions, while the lack of face-to-face interaction decreased advisors' ability to build rapport with their counterparts and forced a reliance upon Afghan self-reporting to assess progress.[19] CSTC-A reported that it made progress in activities not requiring direct interaction, such as working with the Ministry of Defense to create more than 10,000 billets in the Afghan National Army Territorial Force to accommodate the transition of demobilized members of the Afghan Local Police.[20] Work requiring in-person interactions fared less well; training for Afghan pilots and aircraft mechanics slowed and contractors assumed a greater share of ground vehicle maintenance as opportunities for direct training and supervision diminished.[21]

Afghanistan Struggles with Pandemic Response

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported there were more than 39,000 active COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan on October 1 amid "widespread complacency and failure to follow public health advice."[22] COVID-19 cases and deaths are likely underreported, according to OCHA, and a survey by the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health, with technical support from the World Health Organization, estimated that nearly a third of Afghanistan's population, or 10 million people, had been infected.[23]

USAID reported that COVID-19 testing never exceeded 1,200 tests per day and had fallen below 400 tests a day for the last weeks of the quarter, despite high positivity rates. Contact tracing efforts decreased and there remained a lack of personal protective equipment, even as USAID worked to establish local manufacturing of protective equipment.[24] In addition, 100 ventilators USAID delivered to Afghanistan remained unused in a warehouse 2 months after arrival in country, despite Afghan hospitals having only 10 working ventilators at the time.[25]

Afghan National Army solders prepare for a ceremony during a visit from Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley. (DoD photo)

THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

Major Developments 8

Measures of Security 13

Capacity Building 18

Diplomacy and Political Developments 27

Development and Humanitarian Assistance 29

Support to Mission 36

THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

United States Helps Set Conditions for Afghanistan and the Taliban to Begin Negotiations

The United States and the Taliban signed an agreement on February 29, 2020, to advance the peace process in Afghanistan. The United States committed to a conditions-based withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 14 months, if the Taliban meets its commitment to take specific steps identified in the agreement. The Taliban committed to preventing any group or individual, including al-Qaeda, from using Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies. The Taliban also committed to enter into Afghan Peace Negotiations to reach a political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.[1] In addition, the United States committed to work with both the Taliban and the Afghan government on a plan to release prisoners as a confidence building measure.[2]

In the months between the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement in February and the initiation of Afghan Peace Negotiations in September, the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, engaged in an effort to launch those talks. According to the DoS, Ambassador Khalilzad traveled within the region during the quarter, pressing for both the Afghan government and the Taliban to release prisoners and reduce violence before the negotiations. Ambassador Khalilzad also worked closely with Afghanistan's neighbors and international partners to build support for the talks, the DoS reported.[3]

According to the DoS, the United States continued to implement its commitments under the U.S.-Taliban agreement during the quarter. Specifically, the DoS reported that in addition to setting conditions for the Afghan Peace Negotiations, with the start of those negotiations (as stated in the U.S.-Taliban agreement) the United States initiated an administrative review of the U.S. sanctions against the Taliban and began diplomatic engagement with members of the UN Security Council and the Afghan government about the future of the UN sanctions against members of the group.[4]

Afghan Government and Taliban Release Prisoners in Prelude to Negotiations

According to the agreement between the United States and the Taliban, the start of the Afghan Peace Negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban was to be on March 10, 2020.[5] The Afghan government and Taliban postponed talks due to disagreements regarding releases of captured Afghan National Defense and Security Force (ANDSF) members and Taliban fighters as a precondition to starting talks. After prolonged delays, the Afghan government released more than 5,000 Taliban prisoners and the Taliban released approximately 1,000 ANDSF prisoners as prescribed by the U.S.-Taliban agreement.[6]

U.S. and Afghan special operations forces during a raid in Farah Province. (U. S. Army photo)

About Operation Freedom's Sentinel

MISSION

U.S. forces carry 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 enablers 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.[7]

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.[8] The United States increased the number of U.S. troops deployed to combat a "resurgent" Taliban, surging to a force of 100,000 troops in 2010 and 2011. The surge 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.[9]

OFS began on January 1, 2015, when the United States formally ended its combat mission, Operation Enduring Freedom. Under OFS, the United States conducts train, advise, and assist activities under the NATO Resolute Support mission, while continuing counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda, associated forces of al-Qaeda, and ISIS-K. 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 from Afghanistan all military forces of the United States, its allies, and coalition partners within 14 months, and 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.[10]

However, the Taliban's demand that the Afghan government release six fighters convicted of insider attacks that killed U.S. and coalition soldiers, as well as civilians from coalition nations, further complicated the prisoner releases and delayed the start of negotiations. According to press reports, U.S. allies had objected to their release—although the United States itself had not done so formally—and the Afghan government deemed them too dangerous to release.[11] In early September, the Afghan government transferred the six Taliban prisoners to Qatari custody. Following the transfer, the Taliban announced that it would proceed with the peace talks.[12]

In the U.S.-Taliban agreement, the Taliban committed "that its released prisoners will be committed to the responsibilities mentioned in this agreement so that they will not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies."[13] Some Taliban prisoners released from Afghan government custody returned to combat operations against the Afghan government, according to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The Afghan government has a limited capacity to monitor the activities of former prisoners and, consequently, the Afghan government has not reported official estimates of the return of former prisoners to the battlefield. However, the DIA reported that the Afghan government did note several instances in which former prisoners were recaptured or killed in military operations.[14]

In the U.S.-Taliban agreement, the Taliban committed "that its released prisoners will be committed to the responsibilities mentioned in this agreement so that they will not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies."

Afghan Islamic Republic Negotiating Team Represents Broad Afghan Political Spectrum, but Ghani and Abdullah Disagree over Makeup of the Reconciliation Council

According to the DoS, the major political factions in Afghanistan are represented on the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team. Jamiat-i-Islami, a northern-based, non-Pashtun party, and other non-Pashtun groups have aimed to play a role in the talks, and some of the groups have devised their own proposals for the peace process. (Pashtuns are Afghanistan's largest and most widely dispersed ethnic group and are generally represented in government by figures allied with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.) Several prominent non-Pashtun Afghan power brokers, including Mohammad Atta Noor and Abdul Rashid Dostum, have placed their sons on the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team.[15]

SELECTED KEY EVENTS, JULY 1, 2020–SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

JULY 7
Afghan President Ashraf Ghani warns that Taliban violence poses a "serious challenge" to the peace process

JULY 14
The DoD announces the closure of five U.S. bases in southern and eastern Afghanistan to comply with U.S.-Taliban agreement

JULY 31
The Taliban agrees to a 3-day ceasefire for the Eid al-Adha holiday

AUGUST 3
ISIS-K claims responsibility for a complex attack on the Jalalabad prison complex that leaves 29 dead

U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo meets with the Afghan government delegation in Doha, Qatar. (DoS photo)

During the quarter, President Ghani and High Council for National Reconciliation Chairman Abdullah Abdullah clashed over appointments of members of the institutions intended to support the Afghan government's activities related to the peace process. According to the agreement between President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah that resolved their 2019 presidential election dispute Chairman Abdullah's High Council for National Reconciliation would oversee the Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team, led by Masoum Stanekzai.[16]

In August, Chairman Abdullah and President Ghani agreed on the appointment of four deputies to the High Council's leadership committee, bringing the total number of deputies to six, with four appointed by Abdullah and two appointed by Ghani..[17]

Despite the agreements concerning the leadership of the council, President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah disagreed over the appointment of individuals to the High Council. A few days before the appointment of the Minister for Peace, President Ghani publicly

AUGUST 18
Multiple rocket attacks in Kabul disrupt Afghan Independence Day celebrations, injuring at least 10

SEPTEMBER 3
The Afghan government and Taliban reach compromise on prisoner releases, paving way for peace talks

SEPTEMBER 9
Afghan Vice President Saleh's convoy bombed on eve of peace negotiations with the Taliban

SEPTEMBER 10
The then-Secretary of Defense announces troop levels in Afghanistan will decrease to fewer than 5,000 in November

SEPTEMBER 12
Afghan government and Taliban representatives begin meetings to discuss the agenda, guidelines, and schedule for peace negotiations

SEP

named more than 40 people to be appointed to the council main body. However, Chairman Abdullah rejected the appointments, claiming that only he had the authority to appoint individuals to the council.[18] As of the end of the quarter, the full roster of members of the High Council for National Reconciliation had not been finalized.

Afghan Peace Negotiations Begin in Qatar but Stall over Procedural Disputes

Masoum Stanekzai leads the 21-member Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team, which includes four women and consists of government officials, politicians, and members of civil society.[19] The Taliban negotiating team is led by Abdul Hakim, the Chief Justice of the Taliban court system, and consists of 21 men, including Taliban religious officials, diplomats, and military leaders.[20] Hakim had earlier served as a mentor to high-ranking Taliban officials, including former Taliban leader Mullah Mansour, according to media reports.[21]

The Afghan Peace Negotiations began in Qatar on September 12, however, they quickly stalled over two procedural rules proposed by the Taliban and remained on hold at the end of the quarter, according to media reporting. The Taliban and Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team disagreed over the relationship of the talks to the U.S.-Taliban agreement and over the school of Islamic jurisprudence that would be used to resolve disputes between the two sides in the course of the negotiations.[22]

The Afghan Peace Negotiations began in Qatar on September 12, however, they quickly stalled over two procedural rules proposed by the Taliban and remained on hold at the end of the quarter, according to media reporting.

The Taliban insisted that the Sunni Hanafi school of jurisprudence should provide the legal basis for the negotiations, according to press reporting.[23] The Hanafi school is the most widespread school of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence and is currently specified in the current Afghan constitution as the source of law for its courts in cases where neither the Afghanistan constitution nor its laws is sufficient.[24]

However, the Islamic Republic negotiating team expressed concerns that using the Hanafi model as a legal basis for negotiating future Afghan law would not guarantee nondiscrimination against the country's significant non-Sunni religious minorities and therefore rejected the proposal, according to press reports.[25]

In addition to the procedural disputes, significant substantive issues remained. The DIA reported that the Afghan government was not prepared to give up its current republic structure to implement the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law and government. The Taliban also refused to discuss the Afghan government's position of prioritizing an early ceasefire, according to DIA analysis of media reports.[26]

There were also disagreements about whether—or to what degree—the U.S.-Taliban agreement formed the basis of the Afghan Peace Negotiations or imposed duties on the Taliban with respect to the Afghan government, and whether how and when hostilities between the Taliban and the Afghan government would end. According to media reporting, the Taliban said the U.S.-Taliban agreement should be the basis of the Afghan Peace Negotiations, meaning that the Taliban only recognized a ceasefire with the United States, and not the Afghan government, which was not party to the February U.S.-Taliban agreement. Consequently, the Taliban stated that the only reason it is obliged to participate in Afghan Peace Negotiations is because of its agreement with the United States, and that

it would not be required to continue negotiations with the Afghan government if Taliban leaders decided the United States was not adhering to the U.S.-Taliban agreement.[27]

The Afghan Islamic Republic negotiating team, not party to the U.S.-Taliban agreement, has proposed several compromises, including jointly referencing the U.S.-Taliban agreement and the U.S.-Afghan government declaration (in which the Taliban was not a party) as the basis for Afghan Peace Negotiations.[28] The declaration from the United States and the Afghan government states, among other provisions, that a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement will include a permanent ceasefire and a political settlement resulting from Afghan Peace Negotiations.[29] However, the U.S.-Taliban agreement states, among other provisions, that a permanent ceasefire will be an item on the agenda of the Afghan Peace Negotiations.[30]

Shortly after the end of the quarter, the two sides agreed to continue the procedural discussions concurrently with the main negotiations.[31]

Taliban Focuses Violence on Afghan Forces as U.S. Drawdown Continues

The February 29 U.S.-Taliban agreement established a timeline for a full withdrawal of U.S. forces that is contingent on the Taliban's "commitment and action on [its] obligations."[32] To comply with the terms of the agreement, the United States reduced the number of troops in Afghanistan to 8,600 in June, closed five bases, and began preparations for a complete withdrawal within 14 months of the signing of the agreement if the Taliban upholds its commitments.[33] Then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper stated during a media interview on August 8 that the United States would have fewer than 5,000 military members in Afghanistan by the end of November, remaining on a path to achieve the complete military withdrawal if the Taliban upholds its commitments.[34]

Last quarter, the DoS reported that the Taliban publicly claimed to have a ceasefire with the United States.[35] Instead of targeting coalition forces, the Taliban increased its attacks on the ANDSF and Afghan government officials.[36] The violence led Ambassador Khalilzad to state that there is no military solution, and warn that "distressingly high" levels of violence could threaten the peace agreement.[37]

MEASURES OF SECURITY

This quarter, USFOR-A reported that there were instances of indirect fire and surface-to-air attacks against the coalition.

USFOR-A Reports Increased Attacks Against Afghan Forces

United States Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A) reported that the Taliban did not initiate any attacks against the U.S. or coalition forces last quarter.[38] This quarter, USFOR-A reported that there were instances of indirect fire and surface-to-air attacks against the coalition.[39] For example, in August, the DoD stated that the Taliban launched a rocket attack against a coalition base in Helmand, but the Taliban denied responsibility. Media reporting indicated that a Taliban faction opposing the U.S.-Taliban agreement may have carried out the attack.[40] This quarter, USFOR-A did not provide an unclassified estimate of the number of attacks initiated by the Taliban compared to other militant groups.

Last quarter, the Lead IG reported that the United States reduced the number of air strikes it conducted in Afghanistan by 80 percent after the February U.S.-Taliban agreement.[41] While USFOR-A is no longer conducting offensive strikes against the Taliban under the terms of the agreement, USFOR-A has stated that it can and will conduct strikes against the Taliban to defend the ANDSF.[42] More information about U.S. airstrikes is available in the classified appendix.

While USFOR-A is no longer conducting offensive strikes against the Taliban under the terms of the agreement, USFOR-A has stated that it can and will conduct strikes against the Taliban to defend the ANDSF.

USFOR-A stated that enemy-initiated attacks increased this quarter and were above seasonal norms.[43] However, for the third consecutive quarter, USFOR-A classified its estimate of the number of enemy-initiated attacks. In April, USFOR-A stated that the information was "now a critical part of deliberative interagency discussions regarding ongoing political negotiations between the United States and the Taliban."[44] Lead IG reports before February 2020 included data provided by USFOR-A on the number of "enemy-initiated attacks" and "effective" enemy-initiated attacks.[45] Incidents-of-violence data provide insight into the number, type, and location of enemy attacks, and past Lead IG reporting relied on these data as one measure of violence.

The UN Secretary-General also collects and reports data on "security incidents" in Afghanistan. The UN definition of "security incidents" includes violence initiated by Afghan and coalition forces in addition to attacks by the Taliban, ISIS-K, and other extremist organizations.[46] The UN Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan to the Security Council stated that there were 3,706 security incidents from May 15 to July 12, a 2 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2019.[47] The DoD OIG notes that in addressing events from May 15 to July 12, the most recent report to the Security Council only overlaps this quarter by 12 days, and therefore does not cover violence leading up to and during the Afghan Peace Negotiations.

Anti-government entities committed 95 percent of all security incidents, according to the UN Secretary-General.[48] The UN Secretary-General's report did not indicate which anti-government factions were involved in the security incidents. USFOR-A stated that the Taliban has been reducing its public claims of attacks since the U.S.-Taliban agreement was signed, complicating such analysis.[49]

Insider Attacks Continue Against the ANDSF

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that there were no insider attacks against U.S. or coalition personnel this quarter. There were 54 insider attacks against ANDSF personnel from May 1 to October 31, in which attackers killed 228 people and wounded 72.[50]

No High-Profile Attacks in Kabul this Quarter

USFOR-A reported that there were no high-profile attacks in Kabul this quarter.[51] USFOR-A uses the NATO definition of high-profile attacks, which only includes attacks involving a car bomb or suicide bomber.[52] The narrow definition potentially undercounts attacks that may attract more attention, such as one attack in which a roadside bomb detonated next to First Vice President Saleh's convoy as it drove through Kabul on September 9, killing 10 civilians. The Taliban denied that it was responsible for the attack.[53]

Kabul, Afghanistan (U.S. Army Reserve photo)

While not meeting the strict definition of high-profile attacks, other attacks during the quarter garnered media attention and killed multiple people. In August, the Taliban killed 16 and wounded 11 civilians and government officials in a series of targeted attacks throughout Kabul.[54] In addition to Taliban attacks, ISIS-K claimed responsibility for an attack against the Jalalabad prison in Nangarhar province on August 2, according to the DIA. ISIS-K used a combination of vehicle-borne explosives and small arms in the attack, which resulted in more than 50 casualties and allowed hundreds of prisoners to escape.[55]

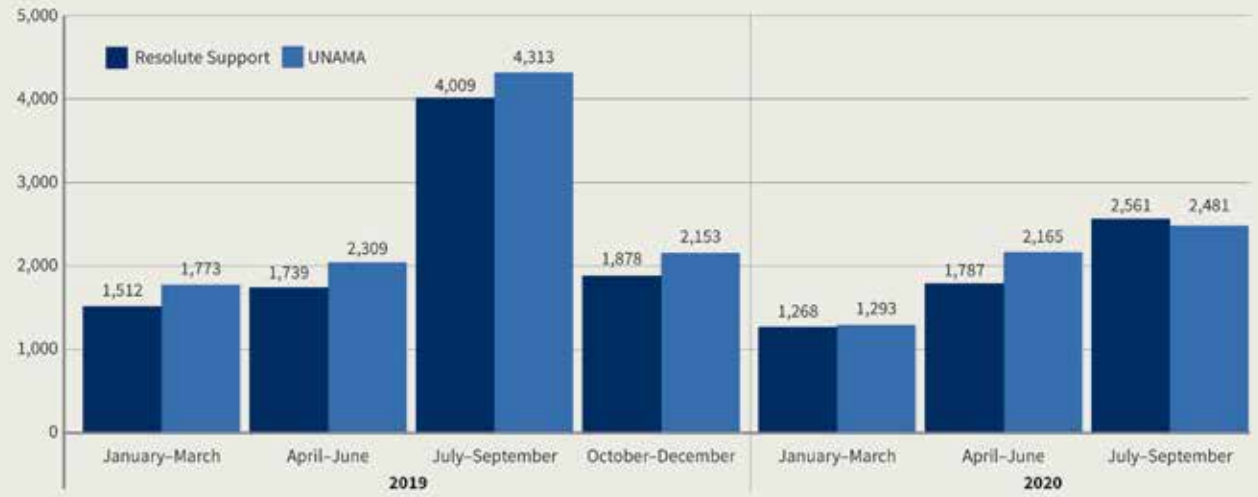
Civilian Casualties Increase This Quarter, but Less Than Same Quarter Last Year

Resolute Support reported that the total number civilian casualties, caused by any individual or organization, increased from 1,787 last quarter to 2,561 (876 killed and 1,685 wounded) this quarter. There was a 36 percent decrease in civilian casualties from the same quarter last year, which was a record high. If compared to the same quarter 2 years ago, this quarter had 10 percent more civilian casualties and appeared more in line with seasonal norms. The provinces with the greatest number of civilian casualties were Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Kabul.[56]

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) separately records civilian casualty data and issues a quarterly report, in which it provides cumulative numbers to that point in the year. Resolute Support and UNAMA often report similar overall trends in civilian casualties, but their data differ in total numbers and attribution of responsible parties. This is due, in large part, to differences in methodology and interpretations of applicable law. Resolute Support assesses reports of civilian casualties 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.[57] UNAMA investigates reports of civilian casualties using victim and witness accounts, statements from medical personnel, and statements from Afghan officials, and requires at least three sources to consider a civilian casualty "verified."[58]

Figure 1.

Civilian Casualties by Reporting Organization, January 2019 through September 2020



Note: UNAMA publishes year-to-date totals for each quarter. DoD OIG calculates the quarterly totals using the difference in the cumulative totals for each quarter, which may differ slightly from actual totals in cases where UNAMA retroactively updates its data.

Sources: USFOR-A, response to SIGAR request for information, 10/3/2020; USFOR-A J5, response to DoD OIG request for information, 20.3 OFS 18, 7/2/2020. UNAMA, "Afghanistan-Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Third Quarter Report: January 1–September 30, 2020," 10/2020; UNAMA, "Afghanistan-Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Midyear Report: January 1–June 30, 2020," 7/2020; UNAMA, "Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019," 2/2020; UNAMA, "Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2018," 2/2019; Lead IG, "Operation Freedom's Sentinel: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress," April 1, 2020–June 30, 2020.

UNAMA reported that it had verified 5,939 civilian casualties (2,117 deaths and 3,822 injured) during the first 9 months of 2020.[59] Given the numbers that UNAMA reported for the first 6 months of 2020, this comes to 2,481 civilian casualties (835 deaths and 1,646 injured) during the quarter, a 42 percent decrease from the number UNAMA reported at the same time last year and the lowest number of civilian casualties in the first 9 months of a year since 2012.[60] UNAMA reported that the Taliban caused the majority of civilian casualties (45 percent) and the ANDSF caused the second-highest percentage (23 percent). U.S. and coalition forces caused only six civilian casualties since the United States and Taliban signed their agreement on February 29.[61]

No U.S. Combat Deaths since Agreement with Taliban

This quarter, there were no U.S. combat-related deaths, two U.S. service members wounded in action, and two noncombat deaths, according to data from the Defense Casualty Analysis System. The last two U.S. combat-related deaths in Afghanistan were on February 8, and there have not been any U.S. combat-related deaths since the U.S.-Taliban agreement was signed on February 29.[62]

From January to September 2020, there were five U.S. deaths in Afghanistan unrelated to combat, according to USFOR-A. One death was a result of a ground vehicle accident, one was from an illness, and three were suspected suicides.[63]

The United States committed to remove all troops from Afghanistan in two phases "with the commitment and action on the obligations" by the Taliban on specific steps identified in the U.S.-Taliban agreement, including preventing any group or individual, including al-Qaeda, from operating in Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.

Terrorist Groups Supportive of U.S. Withdrawal, Anticipate Reduction in Counterterrorism Pressure

The United States committed to remove all troops from Afghanistan "with the commitment and action on the obligations" by the Taliban on specific steps identified in the U.S.-Taliban agreement, including preventing any group or individual, including al-Qaeda, from operating in Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies. The agreement also included several additional Taliban counterterrorism commitments, including to send a clear message that any individual or group seeking to threaten the United States or its allies will not be welcome in Afghanistan and to prevent such individual or group from recruiting, training, and fundraising in Afghanistan.[64] Al-Qaeda's regional affiliate, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), however, welcomes the U.S.-Taliban agreement. AQIS expects the agreement and U.S. withdrawal will reduce counterterrorism pressure, according to the DIA.[65]

In March, al-Qaeda leaders released a public statement congratulating the Taliban on its "historic victory" and agreement with the United States for the withdrawal of foreign troops. In the statement, al-Qaeda leaders called on foreign fighters to abide by the agreement and support the Taliban, likely to demonstrate al-Qaeda's commitment to the agreement. The DIA reported that al-Qaeda leaders support the agreement because it does not require the Taliban to publicly renounce al-Qaeda and the deal includes a timeline for the United States and coalition forces to withdraw—accomplishing one of al-Qaeda's main goals. Additionally, AQIS remains willing to abide by any agreements made by the Taliban in order to preserve a guaranteed safe haven in Taliban-controlled areas, according to the DIA.[66] In September, Ambassador Khalilzad testified that the Taliban has taken some steps to implement their commitments, but has "some distance still to go."[67]

Taliban directed limited resources against ISIS-K, primarily to prevent ISIS-K territorial gains and to counter ISIS-K's attempts to influence Taliban members to defect. Given the other, higher Taliban priorities, the Taliban was mostly reactive to ISIS-K and only minimally disrupted the group this quarter, USFOR-A said.[68]

ISIS-K continued to use its interpretation of the U.S.-Taliban agreement to bolster its messaging and recruiting efforts, according to the DIA.[69] ISIS-K recruiting efforts claimed the U.S.-Taliban deal and that ongoing negotiations were proof of Taliban weakness. The DIA reported that ISIS-K portrayed itself in its recruitment media as an alternative to the Taliban to recruit disaffected Taliban members opposed to negotiations.[70]

Pakistan Encourages Afghan Peace Negotiations Amid Tensions on Afghanistan-Pakistan Border

The DIA reported that Pakistan's overall strategic objectives in Afghanistan almost certainly continued to be countering Indian influence and mitigating spillover of instability into Pakistani territory. Pakistan has encouraged the Taliban to participate in the peace talks and pressed for a reduction in violence to avoid jeopardizing the peace process. As of September, Pakistan publicly claimed that its facilitation of the peace process, especially through its efforts to encourage a reduction in violence and call for negotiations, resulted in the Afghan

Peace Negotiations starting.[71] As described on page 27, key figures from all sides of the Afghan peace talks visited Pakistan during the quarter to discuss the peace process.[72]

During the quarter, Afghan and Pakistani security forces repeatedly exchanged fire. On July 16, Pakistani forces, who said they were responding to rifle fire from the Afghan side the previous day, fired mortar rounds over the border killing four Afghan civilians, according to a media report quoting an Afghan government spokesman who said that the Pakistani fire was returned.[73] On July 30, the Pakistani Frontier Corps opened fire on Afghans who rushed the recently reopened Chaman border crossing after a series of demonstrations on both sides of the border by persons unhappy with the crossing's continuing COVID-19-related closing. Following this incident, Afghan and Pakistani forces traded artillery fire over the border, with each side accusing the other of having initiated the exchange. On August 16, the ANDSF held military drills involving tanks, helicopters, and light and heavy weapons in Kandahar province near the border with Pakistan. The Afghan Army Chief of Staff announced that the drills were a response to Pakistani artillery fire.[74] Chairman of the Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah met with Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa in September, but their discussions focused on the peace process, according to DoS and media reporting.[75]

COVID-19 and the ongoing drawdown of U.S. personnel limited the coalition's ability to train, advise, and assist the Afghan ministries and the ANDSF.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Under the NATO-led Resolute Support mission, the United States works with 38 NATO member and partner states to train, advise, and assist (TAA) the ANDSF.[76] This includes efforts to build the capacity of the Afghan National Army (ANA), ANA Territorial Force (ANA-TF), Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan Air Force (AAF), Afghan Local Police (ALP), and Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF). It also includes efforts to build the capacity and long-term sustainability of the Afghan security ministries. Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) implements capacity-building programs at the ministerial level and the ANA corps level. At lower echelons, the regional Train, Advise, and Assist Commands (TAAC) and regional task forces implement the programs.

Advisors Conduct Virtual Engagements amid Pandemic and Military Drawdown

COVID-19 and the ongoing drawdown of U.S. personnel limited the coalition's ability to train, advise, and assist the Afghan ministries and the ANDSF. CSTC-A reported that the coalition limited face-to-face advising in March to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 between coalition advisors and their Afghan counterparts. CSTC-A stated that in July it began authorizing exemptions to conduct limited face-to-face advising for mission-essential projects.[77]

According to CSTC-A, coalition TAA priorities remained focused on multi-functional projects designed to ensure the Afghan security establishment's viability, such as managing the ALP dissolution, supporting ANDSF leadership development, and countering corruption.[78] As CSTC-A halted in-person advising except in limited circumstances, advisors used email and electronic communication tools to conduct their TAA mission.[79] According to CSTC-A, the change in methodology made advisors more available to their

Afghan National Army Officers Academy graduation ceremony. (NATO photo)

Afghan counterparts, as advisors were able to discuss issues with ministry and defense officials on an on-call basis. The remote approach worked well in applications such as executing a program to improve Afghan pay and recruitment efforts, according to CSTC-A, in which advisors helped to complete a pay and compensation board and to ensure the ANA Recruiting Command appointed reliable personnel to key positions.[80]

However, the lack of face-to-face advising complicated advisors' efforts to build rapport with new partners and read the atmospherics and nuances associated with interpersonal interactions, according to CSTC-A.[81] In addition, the reduced coalition presence made it more difficult to assess, monitor, and evaluate the ANDSF at echelons below the ANA corps level. CSTC-A reported that with no advisors present to gather first-hand information, except for limited interactions for essential cases, CSTC-A became more reliant upon ANDSF self-reporting to assess progress at lower echelons.[82]

Implementation of ANDSF Checkpoint Reduction Plan Falters

This quarter, coalition TAA efforts helped the ANDSF to develop a checkpoint reduction and base development plan for the year.[83] Under the plan, the ANDSF would prioritize checkpoint reduction efforts on the most vulnerable checkpoints, such as those that could not be supported by indirect fires or those that had few personnel assigned.[84] The ANA's checkpoint reduction and base development plan states that the ANA intends to close 9 percent of its checkpoints this year, although it makes no mention of the number of soldiers intended to operate the remaining checkpoints and outposts.[85] The Ministry of Interior Affairs identified 1,054 ANP checkpoints, approximately 20 percent of its total, that it intends to eliminate or consolidate this year.[86]

According to CSTC-A, approximately 29,000 of 178,815 ANA soldiers (16 percent) are assigned to more than 2,000 checkpoints and 66,000 of 99,000 police officers (67 percent) are assigned to more than 5,000 checkpoints throughout Afghanistan.[87] CSTC-A said the ANP needs its police to occupy checkpoints in the current security environment. Until conditions improve, the ANP will be unable to transition to its desired community policing role.[88]

Planning missteps and political pressure hampered checkpoint reduction efforts this quarter. The ANDSF did not synchronize its checkpoint reduction plans between the ANA and ANP, according to CSTC-A, nor did the ANA consider threat assessments and operational planning in its checkpoint reduction efforts. Further, district and provincial leaders and governors often said that checkpoints are the best measures to protect the population and continued to create local political pressure to retain checkpoints the ANA otherwise would consider unnecessary.[89]

CSTC-A reported this quarter that the ANA had a net reduction in checkpoints as it closed 55 checkpoints and constructed 39 new checkpoints in areas it considered strategic positions. The ANP closed 94 checkpoints, reinforced 196 checkpoints, and constructed no new checkpoints.[90]

CSTC-A reported this quarter that the ANA had a net reduction in checkpoints as it closed 55 checkpoints and constructed 39 new checkpoints in areas it considered strategic positions.

Ministry of Defense Prepares ANA Territorial Force to Receive Transitioning Afghan Local Police Members

On June 16, President Ghani issued a decree that directed the ANDSF to dissolve the 30,000-member ALP and incorporate eligible members into other security institutions.[91] CSTC-A estimated that approximately one-third would transfer to the new ANA Territorial Force (ANA-TF), one-third would transfer to the ANP, and one-third would retire.[92]

The ANA-TF will take on much of the ALP's role—to provide local security with local forces—although with more oversight from the ANA, because the ANA appoints army officers to lead ANA-TF units.[93] CSTC-A reported that the intent of transitioning ALP members to the ANA-TF is to minimize the degradation of local security by retaining qualified security personnel and to support ANDSF operations by enabling the Afghan government to maintain security in strategic districts, hold terrain, and "take political space" from the Taliban.[94]

Since the Afghan government created the ALP with U.S. funding in 2011, it has experienced high desertion rates, cooption by local powerbrokers, and corruption, according to the DIA.[95] U.S. support for the ALP through the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) ended on September 30, 2020.[96]

The ALP's dissolution creates the potential risk of former ALP members joining the Taliban, according to CSTC-A.[97] The DIA assessed that defections to the Taliban and local powerbrokers may marginally increase as ALP funding ends, although CSTC-A said that it had not received reports of broad trends in defections.[98]

Until President Ghani issued the decree, the Ministry of Defense had no plan to increase the size of the ANA-TF beyond its current 105 company-sized units. CSTC-A supported the planned ALP dissolution and personnel reintegration by working with the Ministry of Defense to create additional billets for up to 10,851 ALP members to transition into the ANA-TF and for another 11,600 ALP members to transfer into the ANP.[99] However, CSTC-A noted that it is unclear how many former ALP members will choose, and be eligible, to join the ANA-TF or ANP.[100]

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley visits leaders in Afghanistan. (DoD photo)

The Ministry of Interior Affairs screened current ALP members for age, drug use, corruption, human rights violations, and criminal records, and identified 7,500 ALP members who were ineligible to join the ANDSF, according to CSTC-A. President Ghani directed the Ministry of Interior Affairs to refer people not qualified for further ANDSF service to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock, the National Administration of Water Management Affairs, or other organizations for potential employment.[101] However, the Afghan government has not made progress with the transition plans because many ALP members are unwilling to leave their homes to take jobs elsewhere, according to CSTC-A.[102] The DoD OIG notes that is unclear whether the Afghan government is considering different vetting requirements for personnel who are not qualified to continue in the ANDSF before offering alternative government employment options.

ANA Specialty School Attendance Remains Low

CSTC-A reported that Basic Warrior Training attendance and graduation rates remained relatively high during the quarter. Basic Warrior Training is the initial 12-week course that all ANA recruits must complete before being assigned to an army unit. The ANA schedules Basic Warrior Training courses when approximately 1,000 recruits are available so that the ANA can maximize efficiencies associated with larger courses and maintain a regular output of trained soldiers, according to CSTC-A. Four Basic Warrior Training courses finished last quarter and three finished this quarter. Data were not yet available for the course that ended on September 27 at the time of publication. Of the two courses with data available, CSTC-A reported that 1,945 of 2,010 attendees graduated (97 percent).[103] The 97 percent graduation rate was similar to last quarter's 98 percent (3,564 graduating out of 3,645 enrolled).[104]

Table 1.

Training Utilization Rates of ANA Branch Schools

ANA Branch School	June 2020		September 2020	
	Capacity	Utilization Rate	Capacity	Utilization Rate
Combat Arms Schools	611	57%	452	42%
Combat Support Schools	184	35%	515	35%
Combat Service Support Schools	604	75%	1,127	46%
General Services Branch Schools	0	0%	0	0%

Sources: CSTC-A, vetting comment, 10/20/2020; CSTC-A, response to DoD OIG request for information, 20.3 OFS 22B, 6/29/2020.

While Basic Warrior Training attendance and graduation rates remained high, specialty training school attendance remained relatively low. Since 2017, the ANA has experienced low attendance rates at specialty schools and a commensurate low rate of soldiers who are proficient in their unique military occupational specialties. This was caused, in part, because in 2017, the ANA Chief of General Staff issued guidance that all basic training graduates be assigned immediately to their units, which then decide whether the soldiers should attend advanced training. The ANA leadership, which is more focused on immediate problems of attrition and needing soldiers for operations, does not see training for support functions, such as military police, as a high priority, according to CSTC-A.[105] As a result, ANA specialty school attendance is low, particularly for support functions. [106] (See Table 1.)

CSTC-A told the DoD OIG that it assessed specialty school attendance in terms of a percentage of Basic Warrior Training graduates able to attend follow-on schools after graduation.[107] According to CSTC-A, the commander of the ANA Unified Training, Education, and Doctrine Command has suggested to the ANA Chief of General Staff that 50 percent of graduates should attend specialty schools, while the remainder should proceed directly to ANA units.[108]

The Basic Warrior Training course that ended in July sent no graduates to specialty schools, but instead sent 52 percent of its graduates to attend the Special Operations Basic Course to train for the ANA Special Operations Command (ANASOC).[109] NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) reported that special operations training had been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions, and ANASOC required more recruits to achieve its end strength goal.[110]

The course that ended in August sent 34 percent of its graduates to specialty schools. The course ending September 27 planned to send 200 graduates (21 percent) to specialty schools. According to CSTC-A, ANA units lack personnel trained in necessary specialty skills.[111]

CSTC-A reported that it worked to address the shortage in trained specialists by providing contractor teams to train and certify instructors in ANA units.

Some ANA units mismanaged personnel with specialty skills, such as mechanics, by assigning them to checkpoints. CSTC-A reported that in its TAA approach, it focused efforts to correct such personnel mismanagement.[112] Although the ANA subsequently performed more maintenance tasks, CSTC-A noted that it could not conclusively attribute the increased work to improved personnel management practices.[113]

CSTC-A reported that it worked to address the shortage in trained specialists by providing contractor teams to train and certify instructors in ANA units.[114] While CSTC-A reported that contracted training met training goals, CSTC-A could not determine objectively whether there were differences in performance or capabilities between personnel who were trained in specialty schools and those who were trained later, in their units.[115]

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures Complicate Tracking of ANDSF Maintenance Performance

Under the 2017 National Maintenance Strategy–Ground Vehicle Support (NMS-GVS) contract, DoD contractors provide maintenance services on ANDSF ground vehicles and train ANDSF ground vehicle maintenance technicians.[116] Over the 5 years of the contract, the contractors are expected to develop the capacity of ANA and ANP maintenance technicians so they can assume a continually increasing share of maintenance tasks.[117] CSTC-A uses the term "workshare" to describe the percentage of maintenance tasks that either ANDSF mechanics or contracted non-Afghan technicians perform. According to CSTC-A, the ANA should be able to achieve a 90 percent maintenance workshare and the ANP a 65 percent maintenance workshare by the end of the fifth contract year in 2022.[118]

CSTC-A measures the workshare by tracking maintenance work orders completed within NMS-GVS maintenance facilities. When vehicles arrive in a maintenance facility, Afghan and contractor personnel conduct a joint inspection and allocate the repair work to either ANDSF or contractor mechanics. Joint inspections stopped from March through August to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 between contractor and ANDSF personnel. Consequently, the ANDSF could not perform work orders within NMS-GVS facilities and contractors were unable to verify the number of tasks ANDSF mechanics performed. CSTC-A reported that in September, it implemented new COVID-19 risk mitigation protocols and restarted joint inspections. CSTC-A noted that the pause in joint inspections made the following estimates of ANDSF tasks and workshare unreliable and expected the data from September 2020 to be more accurate.[119]

According to data provided by CSTC-A, ANA mechanics performed an estimated average of 262 maintenance tasks per month this quarter, a decrease from 300 tasks per month last quarter. At the same time, the number of tasks performed by non-Afghan contractors in maintenance facilities increased. As a result, the ratio of Afghan tasks decreased from 58 percent in April to 16 percent in September.[120] (See Table 2.)

The estimated number of maintenance tasks performed by Afghan ANP mechanics increased from an average of 69 per month last quarter to 169 per month this quarter. The combined number of tasks performed by Afghans and contractors fluctuated greatly each month, causing the Afghan workshare ratio to fluctuate while the estimated number of Afghan tasks

gradually increased. The ANP Afghan workshare increased from 14 percent in April to 15 percent in September but dropped as low as 5 percent in June when the number of tasks performed by contractors more than quadrupled from April.[121] (See Table 2.)

The DoD OIG notes that it is difficult to make direct comparisons from quarter to quarter because maintenance tasks vary in complexity. Therefore, it is possible to have a surge in more basic tasks that the ANDSF can complete in a quarter and drive up their share, and the following quarter there could be a higher number of complex tasks that require contractor support.

In addition, the maintenance contract—and associated workshare ratios—does not include tasks performed outside of maintenance facilities by DoD contractor "contact teams."[122] A contractor contact team is a group of contractors who perform maintenance outside of designated maintenance facilities. For example, a contact team may be responsible for the repair of a disabled vehicle that cannot be transported to the maintenance facility. The number of contractor contact team work orders performed on ANA vehicles is often double the number of contractor tasks performed at the maintenance centers.[123] According to the U.S. Army, the reported workshare also does not account for work performed by Afghans without NMS-GVS oversight or input. As the ANDSF also performs maintenance independent of the NMS-GVS program, the total amount of maintenance the ANDSF is performing outside of NMS-GVS is unknown.[124]

Table 2.

ANA and ANP Ground Vehicle Maintenance Tasks Performed by Afghans and Contractors, April–September 2020

Afghan National Army		April		May		June		July		August		September	
Maintenance Facility	Afghan	339	60%	333	31%	229	21%	335	25%	268	22%	185	16%
	Contractor	224	40%	733	79%	848	79%	1,005	75%	947	78%	946	84%
Off-Site	Contractor Contact Team	776		2,679		981		2,341		2,623		1,940	

Afghan National Police		April		May		June		July		August		September	
Maintenance Facility	Afghan	57	14%	69	9%	80	5%	157	7%	198	11%	151	15%
	Contractor	345	86%	733	91%	1,396	95%	2,011	93%	1,641	89%	841	85%
Off-Site	Contractor Contact Team	946		2,373		1,405		1,996		1,886		435	

Sources: CSTC-A, response to DoD OIG request for information, 20.4 OFS 25A, 10/4/2020; CSTC-A, response to DoD OIG request for information, 20.3 OFS 20A, 6/29/2020.

The United States transfers four A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to the Afghan Air Force. (NATO photo)

DoD Awaiting Funding for Special Mission Wing Helicopters

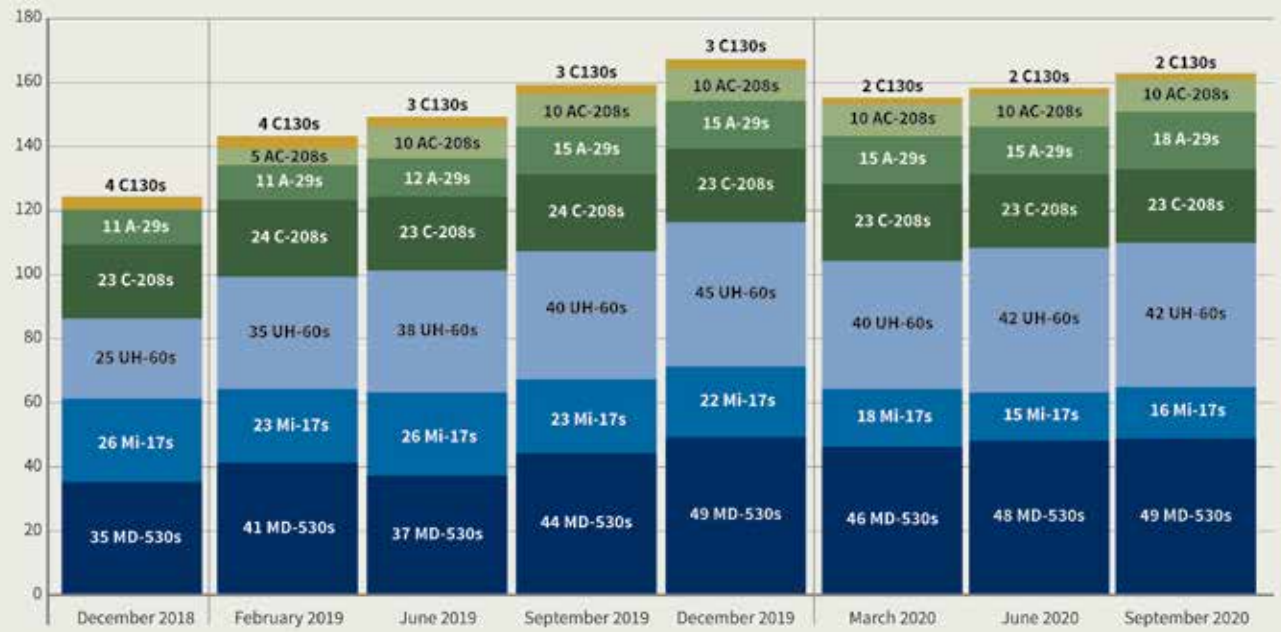
In December 2019, the DoD completed most of its aircraft purchases for its Afghan aviation modernization program after purchasing 53 UH-60 helicopters, 30 MD-530 attack helicopters, 10 AC-208 light attack aircraft, and 6 A-29 light air support fixed-wing aircraft. The DoD reported that the only aircraft not yet purchased under the plan were 20 CH-47 helicopters to replace the Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters used by the Special Mission Wing (SMW).[125] The FY 2021 ASFF request in the President's budget submission to Congress includes $422 million to procure 10 CH-47s and associated parts, supplies, and equipment.[126]

The DoD Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) reported that as of the end of the quarter, the CH-47 procurement was on hold and delivery schedules were in a "day-to-day slip" until funding is in place.[127] The DoD reported that as the AAF begins to phase Mi-17 helicopters out of its fleet, the AAF plans to transfer the aircraft to the SMW to avoid creating a capability gap while the SMW awaits CH-47 delivery. The SMW has enough aviation mechanic billets to field the CH-47s, but it typically takes 12 months to fully train an aviation mechanic. However, past initiatives to develop fully-trained aviation mechanics have only been "marginally successful," which led the SMW to adjust its plans and increase the number of personnel it intends to send to mechanic training. Until the DoD establishes CH-47 maintenance training, and enough mechanics complete the year-long process, the DoD reported that contractors will perform all CH-47 maintenance.[128] Given the time required for aircraft procurement and delivery, and to train Afghan CH-47 mechanics, it is unclear whether and how contracted aviation maintenance will continue once the United States completes its withdrawal of all nondiplomatic personnel.

TAAC-Air reported that the AAF had 183 aircraft in its inventory as of the end of the quarter. Of those, TAAC-Air reported that 160 aircraft were usable, an increase of 5 from the previous quarter (see Figure 2).[129] TAAC-Air defines a "usable" aircraft as an aircraft that is in the country and available for missions or in short-term maintenance.[130] This quarter, four Afghan aircraft were destroyed. An A-29 crashed in Baghlan province on

Figure 2.

Afghan Air Force Usable Fleet, December 2018 through September 2020



Sources: USFOR-A and TAAC-Air, responses to DoD OIG and SIGAR requests for information, Sec-25, 9/3/2018, 12/13/2018, 3/18/2019, 6/10/2019, 10/3/2019, 1/5/2020, 4/9/2020, 7/1/2020, 10/15/2020.

July 9, and the accident is under a safety investigation. An anti-tank guided missile destroyed a UH-60 in Helmand province on July 29. An Mi-17 crashed on September 1, and TAAC-Air could not provide a proximate cause of the crash because TAAC-Air does not have oversight of Mi-17 flight operations. An MD-530 crashed on September 24, and the accident is under investigation.[131]

Afghan Aviation Training Programs Stall

Last quarter, TAAC-Air reported that it transitioned its primary mission focus from TAA to security cooperation management.[132] The change meant that rather than tactical training and advising, TAAC-Air instead focused on managing a portfolio of ASFF-funded contracts for AAF aircraft procurement, aircraft maintenance, pilot and mechanic training, and infrastructure support. TAAC-Air reported that it supplemented the security cooperation management role with limited TAA in key functional areas, including pilot and aircraft maintenance training.[133]

According to TAAC-Air, the AAF needs "significant support" in its maintenance and logistics operations.[134] However, TAAC-Air reported that COVID-19 restrictions hampered contracted maintenance training. Contracted personnel who were at high risk of contracting COVID-19 were sent out of Afghanistan and the Aviation Maintenance Development Center, a facility at the Kabul airport in which contractors train Afghan aviation mechanics,

TAAC-Air reported that it expected training for Afghan A-29 aircraft mechanics, which was delayed by COVID-19 mitigation measures and the gradual U.S. military withdrawal, to begin in November.

was closed in March.[135] Restrictions on face-to-face advising also prevented maintenance training contractors who remained in Afghanistan from operating at their full capacity.[136]

TAAC-Air stated that its primary effort this quarter was to reopen the Aviation Maintenance Development Center and assist contractors in returning to Afghanistan to resume training Afghan aviation mechanics.[137] TAAC-Air achieved its goal in September, when the facility reopened and resumed training at its full capacity of 38 students, according to the DoD.[138]

COVID-19 mitigation measures and the U.S. military drawdown also affected military advisors, limiting TAAC-Air's capability to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Air Force in locations outside the TAAC-Air headquarters at the Kabul airport.[139] As a consequence, advisors were unable to fly on Afghan aircraft, thereby relying upon AAF pilots to "maintain flight discipline."[140]

TAAC-Air reported that it expected training for Afghan A-29 aircraft mechanics, which was delayed by COVID-19 mitigation measures and the gradual U.S. military withdrawal, to begin in November.[141] The SMW made limited preparations for the CH-47 introduction by identifying exceptional pilots for aircraft transition training, but the training will not begin for up to 1 year from when funds are approved, according to the DoD.[142] It is unclear how pilots will be trained if the United States completes its conditional withdrawal of all non-diplomatic personnel before pilot training concludes.

DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Senior U.S., Afghan Government, and Taliban Officials Discuss the Afghan Peace Process with Pakistani Officials

During the quarter, diplomatic engagement with Pakistan by key figures from all sides of the Afghan peace process highlighted Pakistan's important role regarding events in Afghanistan. On August 7, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo spoke with Pakistani Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi to discuss, among other subjects, the importance of U.S.-Pakistan cooperation on the Afghan peace process and the importance of efforts to support regional stability.[143] On September 14, Ambassador Khalilzad spoke with Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Jawed Bajwa in Islamabad and emphasized Pakistan's influence on the peace process.[144]

On August 25, a Taliban delegation led by Mullah Baradar met with Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi in Islamabad to discuss the Afghan peace process, as well as issues impeding the start of the talks and broader Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. The Taliban delegation reportedly informed the Foreign Minister of the progress made toward peace, while the Foreign Minister emphasized the need for full implementation of the agreement and promised that Pakistan would continue to support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.[145]

On September 30, Chairman Abdullah traveled to Islamabad to meet with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and other senior politicians, including Foreign Minister Qureshi and President Arif Alvi. Following the trip, Chairman Abdullah thanked Prime Minister Khan for what he called Pakistan's support of the Afghan peace process and stressed the need

for a reduction in violence leading to a permanent ceasefire.[146] This marked a change in the public approach of Chairman Abdullah, who had previously been critical of Pakistan and its support of terrorism in Afghanistan.[147]

Afghan Government Acts Against Senior Officials Accused of Corruption

During the quarter, the Afghan government took steps toward fighting corruption. In August, government investigators referred former Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum Nargis Nehan and 18 other Ministry of Mines and Petroleum officials to the Attorney General's Office for alleged involvement in a corruption scheme that involved a mining contract approved in 2017.[148] Afghan security forces arrested the former commander of the Afghan National Civil Order Police, Major General Zemarai Paikan, on August 23 in Kabul. The primary court of the Anti-Corruption Justice Center had convicted General Paikan in absentia on charges of corruption and misuse of authority in December 2017, but he had remained at large since that time.[149]

Also in August, the Ministry of Interior Affairs announced the arrest of the Director General of Wardak province's Department of Rural Development, Khalid Rahmati, on corruption charges. Finally, in September, the Anti-Corruption Justice Center sentenced eight businessmen with ties to the Prime Minister's office and Etisalat, a major telecom company, to prison for a variety of embezzlement and bribery crimes.[150] According to the DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (DoS INL), since the Anti-Corruption Justice Center resumed holding trials in June after a COVID–19-related hiatus, the court has increased the number of cases processed. However, the number of cases accepted by the court remains far below the number of indictments referred by prosecutors.[151]

According to the DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, since the Anti-Corruption Justice Center resumed holding trials in June after a COVID–19-related hiatus, the court has increased the number of cases processed.

Afghan Cabinet Approves Regulation on Case Management System

On August 24, the Afghan Cabinet approved a regulation making the DoS INL-developed Case Management System (CMS) the national system of record, and requiring all justice sector institutions to use the online database to track individual prisoners in the Afghan correctional system. According to the DoS, this action marks a key milestone for the sustainability of CMS as DoS INL prepares to hand it over to the Afghan government in 2022. The regulation will become final after Second Vice President and Office of the President approval, and the Ministry of Justice publishes the approval in the Official Gazette. As the transition of CMS to Afghan control moves forward, DoS INL will continue providing technical support, training, and assistance for the system's legal, budgetary, and human resources requirements. As described in the section on COVID-19 in Afghanistan, CMS proved beneficial to Afghan authorities in managing the pandemic in the prison system.[152]

DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID provided $27 million for a peace initiative pilot program through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund's Citizens' Charter program.

USAID Begins Initiative to Support Afghan Government in Afghan Peace Negotiations

The Afghanistan Ministry of Peace requested assistance from USAID for research and communications expertise in support of the ministry's participation in the Afghan Peace Negotiations, according to USAID.[153]

In late July, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives deployed a staff member to determine how best to support the negotiations.[154] In late August, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives began a short-term, $2.5 million Peace Stabilization Initiative for that purpose.[155] USAID reported that the initiative's goals included helping ensure key stakeholders can participate in the negotiations, building awareness and support for the peace process among Afghans, and equipping Afghans with the tools and information to successfully reinforce peace at a local level.[156] This may include logistical or technical support to participants, communications activities with the Afghanistan government, media, or civil society, and research initiatives, according to USAID.[157] The program is expected to end in February 2021.[158]

Citizens' Charter Peace Pilot Program Resumes After COVID-19 Delays

USAID provided $27 million for a peace initiative pilot program through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund's Citizens' Charter program.[159] The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund is a World Bank-managed, multi-donor fund to which USAID has contributed $2.7 billion since 2012.[160] The Citizens' Charter pilot was designed to set up services to underserved communities and help strengthen the credibility of the national government in urban and rural communities in the provinces of Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar.[161]

The services are also intended to help these communities reintegrate by including them in social and development activities that aim to improve their productivity, preserve their livelihoods, and improve their welfare.[162] The Citizens' Charter pilot had been suspended due to COVID-19-related lockdowns.[163] USAID reported that this quarter implementation of the pilot resumed in a district in Jalalabad city, and staff conducted outreach to mobilize community awareness.[164] The Independent Directorate of Local Governance conducted assessments under the program to count household members, refugees, and internally displaced persons.[165]

The Afghan Government Believes Peak of Pandemic Has Been Reached, Creating Challenges for USAID Interventions

Despite indications that COVID-19 remains a serious public health threat in Afghanistan, testing has declined and public health restrictions have been lifted or ignored.[166] Health facilities reported shortfalls in PPE, medical supplies, and equipment, and challenges in maintaining or expanding their facilities' capacity to treat COVID-19 patients, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).[167]

OCHA reported that widespread complacency and failure to follow public health advice, including not observing social distancing protocols, is creating grave risks.[168] Although OCHA reported that Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health data showed 39,285 COVID-19 cases by October 1, 2020, a survey in August 2020 by the Ministry of Public Health, with technical support from the WHO, estimated that nearly a third of Afghanistan's population, or 10 million people, had been infected.[169] OCHA reported that 1,458 people have died, including 76 healthcare workers, from the pandemic.[170] However, actual COVID-19 cases and deaths are likely underreported, overall in Afghanistan, according to OCHA, due to limited public health resources and the absence of a national death register.[171]

LABORATORIES AND TESTING

The WHO had planned in February to increase, with USAID funding, the number of testing laboratories in Afghanistan from 1 to 20 by July.[172] However, the pending U.S. withdrawal from the WHO (scheduled to go into effect in July 2021) slowed down its activities, and associated U.S. funding cuts meant the WHO could only operationalize 11 laboratories, USAID said.[173] OCHA stated that only 13 laboratories were operating in Afghanistan as of October 1, 2020, with limited capacity and no plans to increase the number of labs in the future.[174] USAID reported that the February goal of 2,000 tests per day could not be reached with the level of USAID funding provided. The Ministry of Public Health stated that that testing level was no longer its goal, and that Afghanistan had reached the peak of the first wave and COVID-19 had been controlled.[175] Testing never increased beyond 1,200 tests per day due to limitations at the Ministry of Public Health, including the lack of staffing and of reagents and other consumables, according to USAID.[176] Published data from the ministry indicated that testing had fallen to fewer than 400 tests a day for the last 2 weeks of September.[177]

CONTACT TRACING

USAID reported that it also supported contact tracing efforts with the training of 190 rapid response teams and 15 fixed teams trained on COVID-19 case definition, specimen collection, investigation of cases, and health education for referrals of mild and moderate cases for home quarantine and severe cases to designated hospitals.[178] Another 54 staff were specifically trained on COVID-19 contact tracing.[179] However, as testing decreased, contact tracing levels also dropped off, according to USAID.[180]

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

USAID reported that there is a lack of personal protective equipment, but healthcare workers are unwilling to wear protective equipment and the Ministry of Public health is no longer enforcing requirements to do so.[181] According to USAID, infection prevention and control practices as well as supplies of masks and sanitizer are inadequate to preserve healthcare worker safety.[182] Healthcare staff make up approximately 10 percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan.[183]

USAID reported that there is a lack of personal protective equipment, but healthcare workers are unwilling to wear protective equipment and the Ministry of Public health is no longer enforcing requirements to do so.

While USAID reported that it has not directly procured any personal protective equipment for healthcare workers, USAID is supporting the building of capacity to locally manufacture N95 masks, disinfectants, and hand sanitizers that meet international standards in Afghanistan through its Invest activity, a $15 million program that is anticipated to end in

USAID implementers assemble U.S.-provided ventilators in Jinnah Hospital. (Jhpiego photo)

September 2023.[184] Local manufacturing of products is expected to begin in the March to May 2021 timeframe.[185] USAID also supported through its Goldozi activity, a $10 million, 4-year project that pre-dates the pandemic, the manufacture of nonmedical grade cloth face masks by female embroiderers.[186] USAID expects that the activity can reach out to 1,800 women and produce up to 45,000 cloth face masks per day.[187]

DoS INL Assists Prison Administration in Controlling the Spread of COVID-19

According to the DoS, with the assistance of the DoS INL Corrections System Support Program, the Afghan Office of Prison Administration controlled the spread of COVID-19 throughout the prison system. As of September 15, there were 7 recorded COVID-19 deaths out of a total prison population of more than 24,000. Using the DoS INL-developed CMS, the prison administration identified more than 7,000 inmates, including 369 juveniles, who were able to be released at the beginning of the pandemic. This reduction in the prison population made it significantly easier to meet the cleaning and distancing requirements that are proven to reduce the spread of the disease. In addition, DoS INL donated bleach, gloves, masks, and other medical items to improve sanitation at all facilities. The DoS reported that in coordination with the prison administration, DoS INL was able to pivot to address this emergent need and substantially limit the impact of the disease on the prison system.[188]

Public Hospitals Have Only 10 Working Ventilators while 100 USAID-delivered Ventilators Remained in Warehouse 2 Months After Arrival in Afghanistan

In the previous quarter, USAID reported that the Ministry of Public Health estimated that there were 40 to 80 ventilators in Afghanistan.[189] In August, USAID Afghanistan verified that the majority of ventilators were out of order and there were only 10 functional ventilators found in public health facilities.[190] There may be additional ventilators in

the private sector, but neither the Ministry of Public Health nor USAID knew how many, according to USAID.[191]

From August 5 through September 4, a USAID implementer conducted a Health Facility Assessment Survey approved by the Ministry of Public Health to examine readiness, availability of resources, and the technical capacity of health facilities to receive ventilators. The survey identified 18 public health facilities, including 10 in Kabul and 2 in each of 4 regions (Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-i-Sharif) that were technically capable of receiving the ventilators.[192]

USAID reported that it procured 100 invasive ventilators that were intended to go to public health facilities, along with a few months' supply of consumables and accessories.[193] USAID stated that it is working on a sustainability plan with the Afghanistan government for an additional year of support for the ventilators, funded by USAID through the Global Health Supply Chain Program.[194]

USAID reported that it procured 100 invasive ventilators that were intended to go to public health facilities, along with a few months' supply of consumables and accessories.

The 100 ventilators arrived in country at Bagram on July 30 and 31, on the eve of the 4-day Eid holiday.[195] After 2 weeks, they were transported to the Kabul airport.[196] The ventilators spent approximately 15 days in customs and, after the third week of August, they cleared customs and were transported to a Ministry of Public Health warehouse in central Kabul.[197] USAID reported that USAID Afghanistan staff physically checked on the status of the ventilators in the Ministry of Public Health warehouse twice and reported that the ventilators were physically secured by a guard in a locked room with controlled access.[198] As of September 30, the ventilators remained in the warehouse and had not yet been delivered to any health facilities.[199] USAID reported that in some cases, hospital staff needed to receive technical training to operate the ventilators safely prior to receiving the equipment. Additionally, USAID stated that it intends to work with the Ministry of Public Health to distribute the ventilators.[200]

Polio Resources Previously Diverted to Support COVID-19 Response Returned as Polio Cases Increase

USAID reported that the Disease Early Warning System (DEWS) was instrumental in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in Afghanistan and provided surveillance, laboratory support, and response resources.[201] The USAID-funded project previously supported WHO to collect surveillance and prevention information on communicable diseases in Afghanistan by monitoring sites throughout the country and providing accurate and timely data on diseases, such as polio.. According to USAID, DEWS was responsible for scaling up USAID-funded testing laboratories from 1 in February to 11 by July across the country, setting up point of entry screening at the Iran and Pakistan borders, and creating rapid response teams in major cities to screen suspected and positive patients.[202] Approximately 60,000 polio surveillance volunteers were diverted to the COVID-19 response from March through July.[203] In August, polio resources were redirected back to polio and the polio campaign restarted.[204] The polio outbreak in Afghanistan has worsened in 2020 with cases rising from 29 in 20 districts to 46 in 34 districts as of September 12, 2020.[205]

As of July 1, 2020, approximately $1 million of USAID funding remained in the DEWS, operated by the WHO, of the $1.6 million that USAID obligated in September 2019.

As of September 27, 2020, more than 208,000 people have been displaced in Afghanistan due to conflict this year, according to OCHA.

USAID stated that it expects funding for DEWS to last through March 2021.[206] USAID is currently exploring other options to support previous COVID-19 response activities if the U.S. Government does not come to an agreement with the WHO.[207] These options may include transitioning DEWS into other programs such USAID's National Health Technical Assistance Program, a 5-year, $117 million program that ends in 2024, or to other public international organizations such as UNICEF.[208] Any follow-on program to DEWS would not include support for polio efforts.[209] Polio surveillance, currently provided through DEWS, would be provided by other donors if the U.S. Government does not resume support for WHO activities, according to USAID.[210]

USAID Provides $12 Million to World Food Programme to Address Higher Food Insecurity in Herat and Kabul

USAID reported that it funded a 6-month, $12 million award to the World Food Programme (WFP), beginning on July 1, 2020, to address the increased food insecurity in Herat and Kabul due to the COVID-19 outbreak and associated economic impacts.[211] Through this award, the WFP will provide 95,000 urban families with cash-based transfers to partially cover their food needs for 2 months.[212] The Famine Early Warning Systems Network reported that food prices in Afghanistan generally remained stable between July and August 2020 but were at levels significantly higher than both the 3-year average and prices at the same time last year.[213] Purchasing power also remained stable but 25 percent below the 3-year average.[214]

As of September 27, 2020, more than 208,000 people have been displaced in Afghanistan due to conflict this year, according to OCHA.[215] More than 76,600 people have also been impacted by natural disasters in Afghanistan this year.[216] USAID reported providing assistance alongside the Afghan National Disaster Management Agency to 17,000 people affected in August by flash flooding.[217] USAID support included food, water, and non-food item assistance to 1,200 families, in addition to providing capacity-building support to the Afghanistan government for mapping and service delivery.[218] More than 570,000 Afghans have returned from Iran this year, as of September 26, 2020, with an additional approximately 5,500 returning from Pakistan.[219] USAID reported that it provided some food assistance through the WFP to returnees.[220]

USAID reported that IDPs can be more vulnerable to COVID-19 due to limited access to health services.[221] OCHA has reported a high risk of COVID-19 spread for IDPs due to a lack of physical distancing and hand washing facilities, according to USAID.[222] Recent conflict in the northeast and flooding in the center and east regions of Afghanistan have displaced thousands of households.[223] USAID noted that compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures is challenging for the majority of those affected, according to USAID, exposing them to heightened risk of infection and transmission.[224]

Afghanistan's Economy Continues to Falter, USAID Prioritizes Activities to Increase Trade with Pakistan

The economy in Afghanistan faltered amid COVID-19, a difficult political transition, an intensifying conflict, and uncertainty regarding the future of the donor landscape.[225] The World Bank estimated that as a result of COVID-19 and the government restrictions on travel,

the economy contracted sharply over the first half of 2020, with the poverty rate expected to increase to 72 percent by the end of 2020.[226] Such a significant increase in the poverty rate would have severe effects for the purchasing power of already impoverished households.[227]

The World Bank reported that the onset of the COVID-19 crisis drove a significant spike in food prices over the first half of 2020. Even with food prices stabilizing since August, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network reported that reduced income earning opportunities and lowered remittance flows could mean that urban poor will continue facing reduced access to food.[228] There continued to be worrying economic signs during the quarter. Domestic consumption, private investment, and government revenue all declined due to social distancing measures and the weak confidence of the Afghan people.[229] This in turn limited the Afghan government's ability to implement productive fiscal policy to respond to the economic slowdown.[230] USAID's Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs reported that trade was also reduced as trading partners restricted the movement of goods and services, including the closure of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border from mid-March to June.[231] The office reported that since the partial reopening of the border with Pakistan, trade has improved, although not to pre-pandemic levels.[232]

Afghanistan and Pakistan Improve Cross-Border Transit and Trade

In September, the Pakistani government approved a new visa policy for Afghans visiting Pakistan. Afghan visitors will be allowed to obtain multiple-entry, long-term business, investment, and student visas, as well as a new health category visa, that all will be issued at the border. On September 28, Pakistan's Interior Ministry announced the resumption of cross-border pedestrian movements at Torkham border crossing for 4 days per week, allowing Pakistani and Afghan nationals to travel more frequently. According to the DoS, the announcement represented progress in attempts to facilitate improved Afghanistan-Pakistan trade. In late September, the Pakistani government also announced that on October 1, the Ghulam Khan border crossing in North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, would become the third border crossing for trade transit between Afghanistan and Pakistan, alleviating the backlog of trucks at the two other open border crossings.[233]

In addition to providing trade support, finance, and value-chain development related to the COVID-19 response, USAID prioritized activities intended to encourage trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan.[234] For instance, after the Afghanistan border with Pakistan reopened in June, USAID led efforts with Afghanistan and Pakistan's border crossing facilities to implement new standard operating procedures that eliminated the requirement that cars and trucks be sanitized at the border, thereby reducing wait times and allowing Afghans to export to Pakistan for the first time since the beginning of the border closure.[235]

USAID also conducted a series of private sector engagement roundtables with the Afghanistan and Pakistan chambers of commerce to identify trade barriers due to COVID-19 restrictions and develop solutions that were then shared with appropriate representatives in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. USAID reported that similar engagements with India, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan were under consideration to reduce transit, customs, and safety problems for cross-border trade, which could facilitate increased trade with Afghanistan's neighbors.[236]

USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy Aims to Improve Economy, Social Gains, and Governance

USAID's Fiscal Year 2019-2023 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) is USAID's central strategy for engagement in Afghanistan. The CDCS goal for Afghanistan is to become a more inclusive, economically viable, and self-reliant country with which the U.S. Government can better partner in our national security strategy.[237] Furthermore, the CDCS asserts that foreign assistance is crucial to addressing the security and development challenges that historically made Afghanistan a safe haven for terrorists and violent extremist organizations.[238]

As part of the CDCS, USAID developed three development objectives, which when implemented are designed achieve the goal of USAID's strategy. The three objectives are to 1) accelerate private sector-driven and export-led economic growth; 2) advance social gains; and 3) increase the government's accountability to citizens.[239]

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 1: ACCELERATE PRIVATE SECTOR-DRIVEN AND EXPORT-LED ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID prioritized private sector-driven growth and export-led growth under the CDCS due to the agency's hypothesis that these factors produce increased self-reliance and stability.[240] Due to a lag time in data reporting, the agency reported to USAID OIG that for FY 2019, USAID assisted 415 private firms to become export ready, created 17,305 new or better jobs, brought 14,900 hectares of land under irrigation, and benefited a total of 298,906 beneficiaries.[241] USAID reported that in 2018 there was a positive correlation between the agency's emphasis on export-led growth and Afghanistan's gross export sales.[242]

The CDCS asserts that foreign assistance is crucial to addressing the security and development challenges that historically made Afghanistan a safe haven for terrorists and violent extremist organizations.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 2: ADVANCE SOCIAL GAINS

USAID's emphasis on advancing social gains prioritizes improving health outcomes, increasing the quality of education, and improving gender equality and female empowerment.[243] USAID reported that the agency focuses on high-impact health interventions that, when implemented, lead to increased health outcomes.[244] The agency provided the most recent data available to USAID OIG on its health interventions for the previous quarter.[245] For instance, USAID implementers provided 203,807 women with uterotonics during birth or immediately after birth; 334,964 newborns who were not breathing at birth were resuscitated and attended by a skilled doctor; more than 1 million children under the age of five were supported with nutrition-specific interventions; and more than 93 million liters of drinking water were disinfected with point-of-use treatment products.[246] USAID reported that more than 500,000 learners were reached and assisted in learning to read as part of USAID's Afghan Children Read program.[247] Additionally, according to USAID, more than 68,000 Afghan women benefitted through USAID programming, including leadership training activities, job training programs, education scholarships, and gender-equality empowerment programs, which led to more than 21,000 women reporting new or better jobs than they previously had.[248]

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY TO CITIZENS

In a portfolio review of USAID's progress to date on achieving the third development objective, USAID highlighted several policy reforms that the Afghan government adopted due in part to USAID's support. For instance, in 2020, the Afghan government approved a civil service pay policy, a policy for increasing women's inclusion, and customs and procurement cadre regulations. The Afghan government also revised its tax filing systems, operationalized a tax dispute resolution board, and completed its policy on value-added tax regulations. According to USAID, these policies aim to make the government more transparent and accountable to its citizens.[249]

SUPPORT TO MISSION

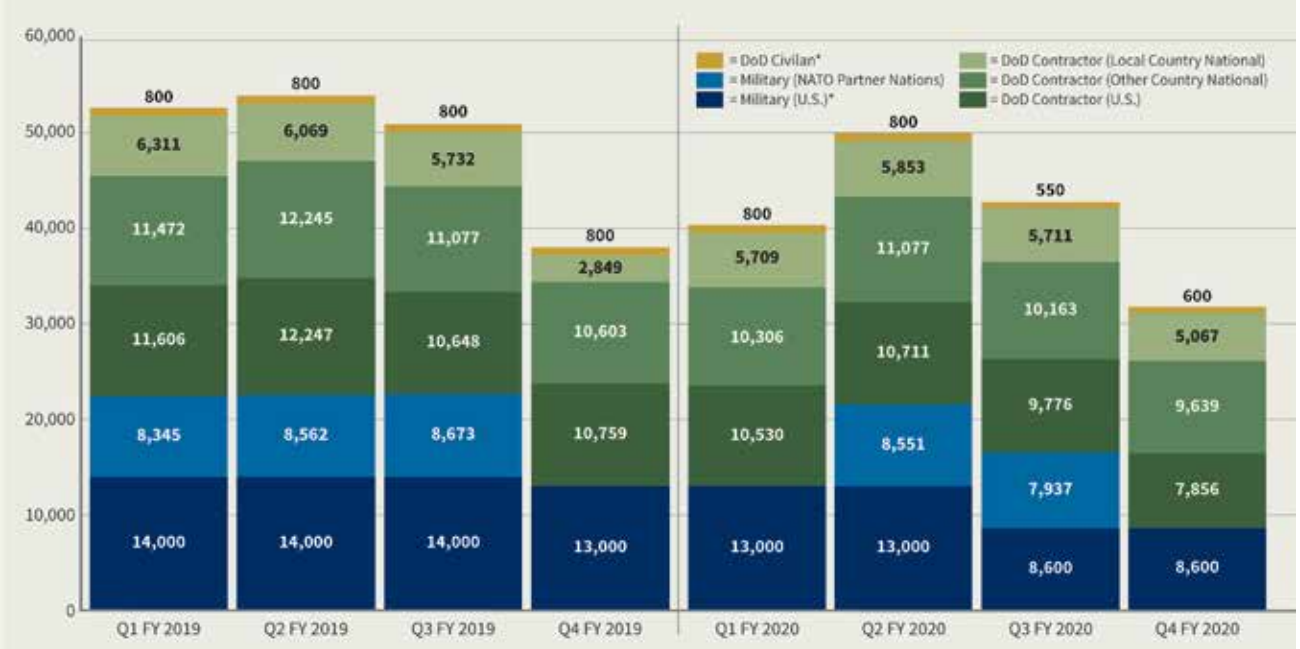
United States Decreases Troops in Afghanistan

The United States had closed five bases and reduced its military presence to fewer than 8,600 military members in Afghanistan at the beginning of the quarter, fulfilling the initial commitments of the U.S.-Taliban agreement.[250] Then-Secretary Esper announced that the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan continues on a pace to have fewer than 5,000 military members in Afghanistan by November 2020.[251] If the United States determines all conditions have been met, the United States has committed to the withdrawal of remaining

National Guard soldiers unload a CH-47 Chinook helicopter from a C-17 Globemaster at an Army Aviation Support Facility in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, after recently completing an extended deployment to Afghanistan. (DoD photo)

Figure 3.

Personnel Supporting DoD Efforts in Afghanistan, October 2019 through September 2020



Note: Figures for U.S. military and DoD civilian personnel are approximate. NATO/partner nation military numbers are not reported regularly and are included only for months the NATO/Resolute Support Mission Key Facts and Figures document is updated.

Sources: DoD ODASD (Log), "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility;" DoD, "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan;" NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures.

U.S. and coalition forces from Afghanistan, including from all remaining bases, within 14 months of the signing of the U.S.-Taliban agreement, which is May 1, 2021.[252] In addition to the military presence, at the end of the quarter, there were approximately 600 DoD civilian employees and 22,562 contractors supporting the OFS mission in Afghanistan, 12 percent fewer than the previous quarter. Of the contractors, 7,856 are U.S. citizens, 9,639 are other-country nationals, and 5,067 are Afghan nationals.[253]

The DoD reported that as coalition bases close, facility support contractors are being demobilized.[254] In addition, as contracted support requirements decrease, the DoD is de-scoping contract requirements. However, military forces continue to rely on contracted support for functions such as base life support and equipment maintenance.[255]

USAID Staff Increases Slightly at U.S. Embassy in Kabul

USAID's direct hire personnel and U.S. and third-country personal service contractors staffing levels at the embassy increased from 7 last quarter to 12 this quarter. The increase was enabled by new authorization to use chartered flights to transport staff back to the Embassy, where previously, all commercial flight options were restricted.[256] The USAID Mission in Kabul remains restricted to 15 total staff.[257] In addition to the 12 staff at the

embassy, approximately 19 U.S. direct hire employees and 26 U.S. and third-country personal service contractors continued to support USAID operations in Afghanistan remotely.[258] Approximately 70 percent of the 142 locally employed Afghans who support the USAID mission at the embassy were teleworking during the quarter.[259]

DoS INL Prepares to Pivot Program Implementation in Support of Peace Process

Noting that most of its active programs in Afghanistan are funded through FY 2021, DoS INL stated to the DoS OIG that the Bureau has not made any adjustments to its planning efforts to account for a potential withdrawal of U.S. forces. DoS INL stated that specific future needs are unknown at this time, but that the Bureau anticipates requests for support related to critical sectors such as counternarcotics, justice, gender justice, and corrections.[260]

During the quarter, DoS INL-funded mentors from the UN Office of Drugs and Crime and the U.S. Department of Justice returned to Kabul from a temporary redeployment due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, resumed case-based mentoring, and are exploring options for safely conducting training in the COVID-19 environment.[261] DoS INL stated that it is prepared to adjust program implementation within applicable legal and regulatory parameters, as well as within policy guidelines, to help consolidate a peace agreement.[262]

DoD Obligations for OFS Increase over FY 2019 Levels

Last quarter, the DoD Comptroller released the DoD's congressionally mandated Cost of War report, which details the DoD's spending on overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere through December 31, 2019. According to the Cost of War report, the DoD spent $1.58 trillion in support of contingency operations since September 11, 2001. The total cost of operations in Afghanistan over that time was $782.7 billion, of which $207.6 billion has been obligated in support of OFS since that operation began in 2015.[263]

The DoD Comptroller reported that as of July 31, 2020, the DoD had obligated $33.95 billion for OFS in FY 2020. Of its obligations, the DoD had made $29.03 billion in expenditures. According to the Comptroller, the military services provided the cumulative FY 2020 obligations and expenditures as part of the next Cost of War report.[264] For the first 10 months of FY 2020, the DoD obligated $3.395 billion on average, a 3 percent increase from the $3.283 billion monthly average of FY 2019.[265]

The DoD Comptroller reported that as of July 31, 2020, the DoD had obligated $33.95 billion for OFS in FY 2020.

Fewer U.S. Inspectors to Conduct End Use Monitoring Inspections

The Arms Export Control Act requires the U.S. Government to ensure foreign end-users comply with agreements associated with the transfer or sale of certain U.S. defense articles.[266] CSTC-A is responsible for managing the end-use monitoring (EUM) program in Afghanistan. Its responsibilities include receiving defense articles, transferring them to the Afghan government, registering the transfer, processing changes in end use, coordinating EUM inspections, and reporting EUM violations.[267]

The military drawdown in Afghanistan and COVID-19 pandemic mitigation measures have affected the EUM program by reducing the number of U.S. advisors able to assist with EUM inspections, according to CSTC-A. In addition, COVID-19 and security restrictions have made it difficult for representatives to travel to EUM inspection sites, preventing the required annual 100 percent enhanced-EUM inspection.[268]

According to CSTC-A, it met routine EUM inspection requirements through the use of observations and feedback from U.S. personnel conducting TAA missions on-site with Afghan partners. However, CSTC-A noted that it will be challenged to monitor the end use of more than 12,000 enhanced-EUM items. To mitigate this challenge, CSTC-A said that it used a 2014 Defense Security Cooperation Agency exception to policy allowing for alternate means to meet EUM site inspection and physical inventory requirements. CSTC-A reported that it used this authority to conduct inventories of more than 400 enhanced-EUM items since February 2020.[269]

A U.S. Air Force F-35 Lightning II flies over the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. (U.S. Air Force photo)

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Strategic Planning 42

Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Activity 44

Investigations and Hotline Activity 54

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 July 1 through September 30, 2020.

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. That oversight plan is updated each year.

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 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OFS was included in the FY 2021 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations.

The Joint Planning Group for overseas contingency operations 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 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 August 2020, the Joint Planning Group held its 51st meeting, carried out virtually to accommodate participants because of coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) precautions. The participants discussed OCO-related audits, inspections, and other oversight projects they planned to conduct during FY 2021.

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 nonmilitary 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 on projects related to overseas contingency operations. Due to the evacuation of deployed staff from OCO locations and country-imposed travel restrictions, the Lead IG agencies continued to conduct oversight work while teleworking and practicing social distancing. Some oversight projects were either delayed or deferred, or the scope of the work was revised or narrowed.

Based on DoD force health protection guidance, the DoD OIG made decisions on when to return personnel to overseas locations on a case-by-case basis. The DoS OIG and USAID OIG also monitored local conditions to determine when to resume overseas oversight operations. Prior to the pandemic, some oversight staff from the Lead IG agencies were stationed in offices in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, and Germany. Oversight teams from these offices and from offices in the United States would travel to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other locations in the region to conduct fieldwork for their projects.

Despite these constraints, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed seven reports related to OFS during the quarter. These reports examined various oversight activities that support OFS, including oversight of whether military services properly stored, tracked, and safeguarded pharmaceuticals; the Air Force's oversight and management of a contract to support remotely piloted aircraft, to include those deployed to Afghanistan; as well as DoS processes and procedures for staffing at the U.S. Mission to Afghanistan.

As of September 30, 2020, 35 projects related to OFS were ongoing and 21 projects related to OFS were planned.

Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Management of Pharmaceuticals in Support of the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility

DODIG-2020-120; August 28, 2020

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the military departments properly accounted for and safeguarded pharmaceuticals at locations supporting overseas contingency operations in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility.

The DoD operates a large network of medical treatment facilities to provide routine medical care to maintain healthy forces in the field and the specialized care for treating traumatic injuries in combat. Within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, there are medical logistics facilities to provide medical materiel management and medical logistics facilities

to assist with the procurement, storage, and distribution of pharmaceuticals. In this audit, the audit team visited eight medical treatment facilities, including locations in Qatar and Kuwait, which support the OFS mission.

The DoD OIG determined that the Military Services did not fully account for or safeguard pharmaceuticals at medical treatment facilities, medical logistics facilities, at the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center-Southwest Asia warehouse, and at the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center-Southwest Asia Forward Logistics Elements in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. These deficiencies in accounting for and safeguarding pharmaceuticals occurred because USCENTCOM's existing guidance did not provide a unifying method for U.S. military forces within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility to account for and safeguard pharmaceuticals in accordance with theater, service, and unit-level specific processes.

The DoD OIG made several recommendations to address deficiencies raised in the audit findings. The DoD OIG recommended that the USCENTCOM theater pharmacist coordinate with the USCENTCOM surgeon to establish or update policies and procedures to clarify the requirements for conducting inventories, and include in the policy requirements the minimum level of security required for controlled and noncontrolled pharmaceuticals. The DoD OIG also recommended that the USCENTCOM theater pharmacist develop a tracking mechanism and follow up on any deficiencies identified during the theater pharmacist review, verify that proper forms are completed and updated, and that inventories are completed monthly. The DoD OIG further recommended that the USCENTCOM theater pharmacist update the site visit review checklist to include requirements to verify that the proper forms are completed and updated, noncontrolled pharmaceutical inventories are completed, security procedures are followed, and security deficiencies are addressed.

Management agreed with the recommendations and the DoD OIG verified that USCENTCOM implemented corrective actions.

Audit of the Air Force Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operations and Maintenance Support Contract

DODIG-2020-108; August 3, 2020

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the Air Combat Command, Acquisition Management and Integration Center's (AMIC) oversight and management of the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Operations and Maintenance Support contract ensured that the contractor complied with required maintenance procedures and performance requirements. During the audit, the DoD OIG expanded its review to also determine whether AMIC verified the accuracy of contractor invoices before making payments and only reimbursed the contractor for contractually eligible costs.

The Air Force has operationally deployed RPAs (e.g., the MQ-9 Reaper and the RQ-4 Global Hawk) to support contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and several other countries. In March 2018, AMIC's contracting office awarded contract with a $961 million ceiling to AECOM Management Services, Inc., for operations and organizational-level maintenance support to sustain the combat and training capability of the MQ-9 and RQ-4.

The DoD OIG determined that AMIC ensured that the RPA contractor complied with contractually required maintenance procedures and performance requirements. Furthermore, AMIC verified the accuracy of contractor invoices before payment and only reimbursed the contractor for contractually eligible costs. However, AMIC did not formally document its invoice review process. Instead of having written procedures, AMIC staff stated that they reviewed 100 percent of contractor invoices and relied on informal guidance from the contracting officer and program manager to ensure that AMIC only paid the contractor for contractually compliant performance and reimbursement costs. The DoD OIG reviewed a statistical sample of 33 of 139 firm-fixed-price invoices, and 30 of 70 cost reimbursable invoices, and did not find any instances of the contractor claiming ineligible costs for reimbursement.

As a result of AMIC's contract oversight, AMIC had assurance that the $124 million spent on the RPA contract was for contractually compliant services and only included costs eligible for reimbursement. However, without a documented invoice review process, future contracting and program management staff may inconsistently review invoices, which could result in payments to the contractor for ineligible costs.

The DoD OIG recommended that the AMIC Director direct the RPA Operations and Maintenance Support Contract program manager and contracting officer to develop and

A MQ-9A Reaper carrying eight Hellfire missiles. (U.S. Air Force photo).

implement formal procedures detailing who is responsible for conducting invoice reviews and the methodology for conducting those reviews.

Management agreed with the recommendations.

Audit of the Core Inventory Management System Implementation

DODIG-2020-104; July 10, 2020

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine if the DoD's implementation of the Core Inventory Management System (CoreIMS) improved accountability for U.S.-provided weapons and vehicles to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

The Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) uses CoreIMS as an internet-based system of record to track equipment, weapons, and vehicles provided to the ANDSF by the DoD. CoreIMS is intended to provide the ANDSF with visibility, transparency, and accountability for equipment. In addition, the software provides the ability to manage shipping, receiving, and inventory for warehouse operations, as well as automated inventory management at national and regional logistics facilities.

The DoD OIG determined that although CoreIMS improved the accountability of weapons and vehicles at ANDSF national and regional facilities, the system does not effectively account for equipment at local sites. CSTC-A's processes, implemented in August 2016, effectively catalogued 95 percent of ANDSF weapons and vehicles between October 2016 and August 2019. However, the audit determined that the ANDSF did not use CoreIMS at 78 of 191 local sites, attributing the problem to issues such as the absence of reliable electrical power, poor internet connectivity, lack of proper local training, and the ANDSF's preference to use paper records rather than automated information systems. In addition, CSTC-A did not fully consider these potential challenges when planning for the implementation of CoreIMS across the ANDSF.

Furthermore, as a result of the ANDSF's inability to implement CoreIMS at some ANDSF sites, CSTC-A is limited in its ability to assist the ANDSF in identifying potential problems such as theft, planning future equipment requirements, and preventing the duplicate issuances of weapons and vehicles.

The DoD OIG recommended that CSTC-A work with the ANDSF to develop a manual process whereby ANDSF sites lacking CoreIMS provide inventory information to sites where CoreIMS is implemented. For example, ANDSF personnel could deliver hardcopy documentation on a monthly or quarterly basis to sites where CoreIMS is in use and then enter the data into the system of record.

The DoD OIG also recommended that CSTC-A conduct an assessment to determine which challenges are preventing the 78 local ANDSF sites from adopting CoreIMS. In addition, CSTC-A should identify resource needs to rectify site-specific issues before expending additional resources on enhancing CoreIMS.

Management agreed with the recommendations. The recommendations will be closed when CSTC-A provides documentation showing completion of the recommended actions.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Food Services under the Afghanistan Life Support Services Contract

AUD-MERO-20-46, September 25, 2020

The DoS provides life support services to U.S. Government personnel working in Kabul through the Afghanistan Life Support Services (ALiSS) contract. One of the ALiSS contract's task orders requires the contractor to provide three meals a day, 7 days a week, across multiple dining facilities on the embassy compound and at other outlying U.S. Government facilities in Kabul. The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the DoS administered the ALiSS food services task order in accordance with Federal regulations, DoS policies, and contract terms and conditions.

The DoS OIG found that the DoS did not administer the ALiSS food service task order in accordance with all applicable Federal regulations, DoS policies, and contract terms and conditions. For example, although the contracting officer's representative developed an oversight checklist that included items to monitor, the checklist did not include almost half of the performance standards the contracting officer's representative was required to monitor. Moreover, the contracting officer's representative did not properly maintain oversight checklists, and the contractor never established or implemented a cost control plan, as it had indicated it would do in its bid proposal for the task order. Finally, the DoS OIG found that the DoS did not consider the declining number of personnel living and working at the Kabul embassy compound and outlying U.S. Government facilities when it decided to exercise the contract's most recent option year, making the number of meals estimated for the option year, and the costs related to that estimated number of meals, higher than it should have been, resulting in the DoS paying almost $8.4 million for meals it did not need and that were not provided.

The DoS OIG made five recommendations that are intended to improve the administration and oversight of future food service task orders. The relevant DoS bureaus and offices concurred with all five recommendations and the DoS OIG considered all five recommendations resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Audit of Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Process to Identify and Apply Best Practices and Lessons Learned to Future Construction Projects

AUD-MERO-20-39, September 2, 2020

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine the extent to which the DoS Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations ("the Bureau") was evaluating completed construction projects to identify and communicate best practices and lessons learned that can be applied to future construction projects. For this audit, the DoS OIG reviewed and considered the practices employed for several construction projects, including Amman, Jordan; Kabul, Afghanistan; Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; and Islamabad, Pakistan.

The DoS OIG found that the Bureau had a process to identify, disseminate, and apply lessons learned that are associated with technical design standards and criteria. However, the DoS OIG found that the process did not capture broader best practices or lessons learned that are critical to the Bureau's construction work, including strengthening collaboration

among stakeholders, facilitating building maintenance, and improving program and construction management. The DoS OIG determined that these activities had been overlooked in the lessons learned process because the Bureau had devoted attention and resources solely to collecting and addressing technical design challenges encountered in its construction projects.

The DoS OIG made four recommendations in this report, three to the Bureau and one to the DoS Office of Acquisitions Management. These offices concurred with all four recommendations and the DoS OIG considered one recommendation closed and three recommendations resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Audit of the Department of State's Approach to Adjust the Size and Composition of U.S. Missions Afghanistan and Iraq

AUD-MERO-20-38; August 4, 2020

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the DoS used established procedures, guidance, and best practices in its approach to adjust the size and composition of Missions Afghanistan and Iraq, and aligned resources invested at these missions with established U.S. Government foreign policy priorities.

The DoS OIG found that the DoS's approach to adjusting the number and composition of the staff at Missions Afghanistan and Iraq did not fully use existing procedures, guidance, or best practices from previous efforts. Specifically, the DoS OIG found that each mission conducted staffing reviews in an expedited manner because both the Office of the Secretary of State verbally directed both missions to immediately reduce staff despite foreign policy priorities and strategic diplomatic objectives for each mission, including preventing and countering malign threats.

The DoS OIG made three recommendations to ensure that staffing levels at Missions Afghanistan and Iraq align with U.S. foreign policy priorities and that these missions have the appropriate resources to achieve strategic diplomatic objectives. The Office of the Under Secretary of State for Management concurred with all three recommendations and the DoS OIG considered all three recommendations resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Classified Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland

ISP-S-20-16; July 6, 2020

The DoS OIG issued this classified report based on its inspection of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland. An unclassified report was published last quarter and a summary of that report was included in the previous OFS quarterly report. This classified report was provided to authorized recipients.

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

USAID OIG COMPLETED FINANCIAL AUDITS

USAID OIG issued nine financial audit reports on USAID's Afghanistan program this quarter. The financial audits covered $180,761,317 in program funds and found a total of $269,413 in questioned costs. In total, the audits identified 22 instances of material noncompliance, and 4 instances of material internal control weaknesses. Two additional internal control significant deficiencies were also identified.

Table 3 lists the released report title and report number.

Table 3.

USAID OIG Financial Audit Reports Issued This Quarter

Report	Release Date
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Chemonics International Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan, 2015-2018 8-306-20-049-N	August 17, 2020
Closeout Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of ZOA Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan, 2015-2019 8-306-20-048-N	August 11, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Roots of Peace, Commercial Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing Program in Afghanistan, Cooperative Agreement 306-A-00-10-00512, January 1 to December 31, 2018 8-306-20-047-N	July 30, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Family Health International Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan, January 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019 8-306-20-046-N	July 29, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Tetra Tech, ARD Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan, From October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018 8-306-20-045-N	July 28, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of DAI Global, LLC, Under Multiple Awards in Afghanistan, 2017-2018 8-306-20-044-N	July 27, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of Michigan State University Under Grain Research and Innovation Program in Afghanistan, Cooperative Agreement AID-306-OAA-A-13-00006, January 1 to December 31, 2018 8-306-20-043-N	July 14, 2020
Audit of Fund Accountability Statement of Tetra Tech, Inc. Under the Engineering Support Program in Afghanistan, Contract 306-AID-306-C-16-00010, July 23, 2018 to September 30, 2019 8-306-20-041-N	July 8, 2020
Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening, Strengthening Civic Engagement in Elections in Afghanistan Project, Cooperative Agreement 72030618LA00004, August 9 to December 31, 2018 8-306-20-040-N	July 7, 2020

Final Reports by Lead IG Partner Agencies

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

Afghan National Army: DoD Did Not Conduct Required Oversight or Assess the Performance and Sustainability of the $174 Million ScanEagle Unmanned Aerial System Program

SIGAR 20-44; July 14, 2020

SIGAR conducted the audit to examine the implementation and oversight of five firm-fixed-price ScanEagle contracts awarded to Insitu, Inc., valued at more than $174 million, and the broader ScanEagle program in Afghanistan from November 2015 through November 2019. The objectives of this audit were to determine the extent to which the contractor met the terms of the contracts and the DoD performed the required oversight of the ScanEagle program; the DoD measured and evaluated the ScanEagle program's performance; the DoD planned for the Afghan government's sustainment of the ScanEagle program; and the Afghan National Army (ANA) developed the capabilities necessary to operate and sustain the program.

In 2015 CSTC-A identified an impending capability gap related to the ANA's ability to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations that would result from a drawdown of coalition forces. To increase the ANA's ISR capabilities, the DoD funded the purchase of 16,000 ISR assets, such as night vision devices and surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles, including the ScanEagle unmanned aircraft systems. ISR capabilities support the U.S. and Afghan governments' broader goals for the ANDSF to counter current and future threats to Afghanistan.

SIGAR determined that Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR)—responsible for overseeing the ScanEagle contracts and this contract with Insitu in particular—was unable to determine the extent to which Insitu met the terms of the contracts because NAVAIR did not meet U.S. Government requirements for conducting contract oversight. First, NAVAIR did not designate a contracting officer's representative for all of the ScanEagle contracts, as DoD guidance required. Second, NAVAIR did not have a sponsor in Afghanistan responsible for validating contract requirements, as required. Third, NAVAIR could not produce evidence that Insitu completed many of the deliverables required of it under the contract.

As a result of the shortcomings the audit identified, NAVAIR lacked important information on the numbers of ANA soldiers Insitu trained, the number of hours ANA-operated ScanEagle vehicles flew, the amount of spare parts purchased and used to maintain the ScanEagle systems, and the number of ScanEagle crashes or failures.

SIGAR made five recommendations to improve ScanEagle contract oversight to ensure that U.S. investments in training ANA soldiers to perform the ScanEagle mission are protected. The recommendations included directing NAVAIR personnel who manage and oversee the ScanEagle contracts to ensure the contracting officer's representative on the current contract is performing all required contract oversight duties and is documenting and maintaining records relating to deliverables.

Afghan Ministry of Interior Security Upgrades: Project Was Generally Completed According to Contract Requirements, but Construction and Maintenance Problems Exist

SIGAR 20-45-IP; July 13, 2020

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) inspected security and access upgrades at the Afghan Ministry of Interior Affairs headquarters complex in Kabul.

In December 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded a $2.4 million contract to complete upgrades at the complex. During site visits, SIGAR determined that upgrades were generally completed according to contract requirements. However, SIGAR identified construction deficiencies: a concrete barrier, a noncompliant ground cable, and identification card readers that were not installed at turnstiles at building entry and exit points. SIGAR also identified security concerns related to nonworking streetlights, missing panic bars, and unauthorized padlocks on exit doors.

SIGAR made two recommendations in their report: to notify the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the construction deficiencies and to notify the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the maintenance problems. In response to these recommendations, the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) stated that it verbally advised the Ministry of Interior Affairs of these deficiencies; however, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did not concur with either recommendation and requested these recommendations be forwarded to CSTC-A, since they were the project sponsor. SIGAR agreed and redirected the recommendations.

Ongoing Oversight Activities

As of September 30, 2020, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 35 ongoing projects related to OFS. Figure 4 describes the ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 4 and 5, contained in Appendix C, list the titles and objectives for each of these projects. Appendix C also identifies ongoing projects that the DoD OIG suspended due to COVID-19. Those projects will restart when force health protection conditions permit. The following sections highlight some of these ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

Figure 4.

Ongoing Projects by Strategic Oversight Area

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- The **DoD OIG** is evaluating the process to counter improvised explosive devises by using tactical jammers.
- The **DoS OIG** is reviewing the DoS's plans and procedures for employees to return to offices, including the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, during the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring suitable safety and welfare considerations and precautions.
- **SIGAR** is examining whether the Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing have developed vetting policies and procedures to identify corrupt and potentially corrupt personnel.

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

- **SIGAR** is identifying DoD projects to build infrastructure and support women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.
- The **DoS OIG** is conducting an audit to assess risks related to voluntary contributions to public international organizations.

SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an evaluation to determine whether USCENTCOM executed pandemic response plans resulting from COVID-19.
- The **DoS OIG** is reviewing DoS management of the DoS Public Diplomacy Locally Employed Staff Initiative, and surveying public diplomacy officers to assess the clarity, progress, and results of the program in the field.
- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to assess USAID's procedures for guiding acquisition award terminations.

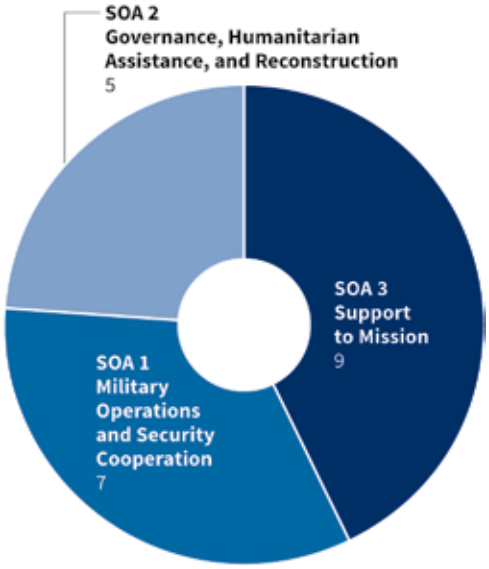
Planned Oversight Projects

As of September 30, 2020, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 21 planned projects related to OFS. Figure 5 describes the planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 6 and 7, contained in Appendix D, lists the titles and objectives for each of these projects. Appendix D also identifies planned projects that the DoD OIG suspended due to COVID-19; those projects will restart when force health protection conditions permit. The following sections highlight some of these planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Figure 5.

Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area



MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to evaluate 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.
- **SIGAR** intends to assess the extent to which the DoD and the ANDSF ensured the proper storage, maintenance, and usage of Class VIII supplies and equipment.

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

- **USAID OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine the extent to which USAID's anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan are integrated into USAID activities, and how the agency responds to information about fraud that could affect its programs.

- **SIGAR** intends to inspect 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 allowance, and combat zone tax exclusion for combat zone deployment.
- The **DoS OIG** intends to determine whether the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul is conducting oversight of its grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with Federal and DoS guidance.
- **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.

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. However, COVID-19 continued to affect the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct OFS-related investigations. The Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS, the DoD OIG's criminal investigative component) has temporarily removed investigative personnel from its offices in Afghanistan, but the investigators are working on OFS-related cases from Bahrain, or teleworking. DoS OIG and USAID OIG investigators have returned to the United States, and are teleworking.

In addition, these investigative components continue to investigate 26 "legacy" cases pertaining to actions committed during Operation Enduring Freedom, which concluded in December 2014.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO OFS

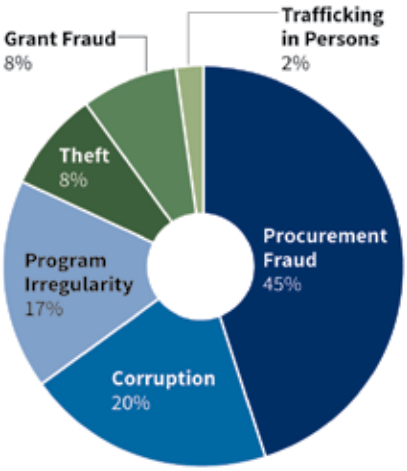
During this quarter, investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 30 investigations, initiated 2 new investigations, and coordinated on 64 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

The Lead IG agencies and partners 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 Investigative Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

ACTIVITY BY FRAUD AND CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIVE WORKING GROUP

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL

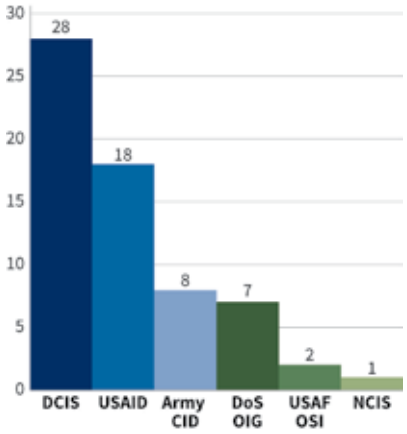
As of September 30, 2020



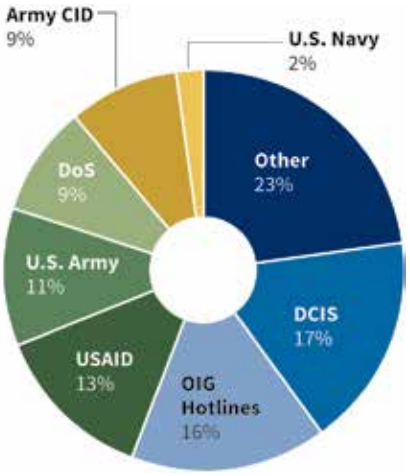
OPEN INVESTIGATIONS*

64

OPEN INVESTIGATIONS BY WORKING GROUP MEMBER*



SOURCES OF ALLEGATIONS



Q4 FY 2020 ACTIVITY

Cases Opened	2
Cases Closed	30

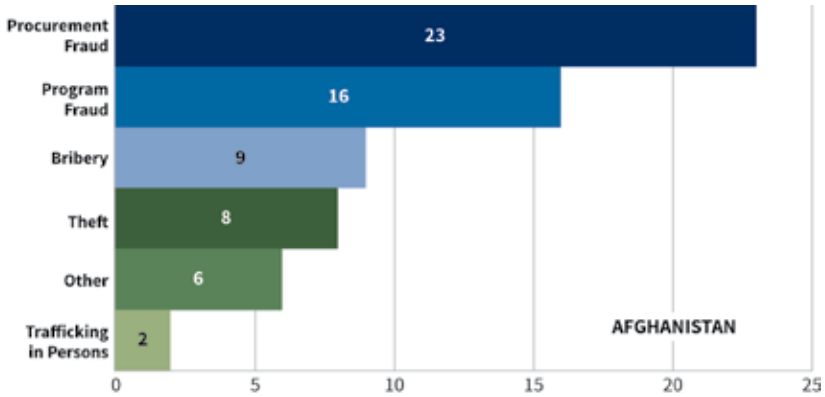
Q4 FY 2020 BRIEFINGS

Briefings Held	—
Briefing Attendees	—

Q4 FY 2020 RESULTS

Arrests	—
Criminal Charges	—
Criminal Convictions	—
Fines/Recoveries	—
Debarments	—
Personnel Actions	—
Contract Terminations	—

PRIMARY OFFENSE LOCATIONS (PROVINCES)



* 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 9/30/2020.

This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group did not conduct any fraud awareness briefings. The dashboard on page 55 depicts the activities of the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO LEGACY CASES

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies have 26 ongoing "legacy" investigations related to activities involving the OFS area of operations that occurred prior to the designation of OFS. Two of those cases are discussed below.

SUBCONTRACTOR AGREED TO PAY $1.35 MILLION TO RESOLVE THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAIMS UNDER THE FALSE CLAIMS ACT

On August 14, 2020, Vohne Liche Kennels, Inc. (VLK) agreed to pay $1.35 million to resolve allegations of violations of the False Claims Act for fraudulently submitting claims for labor hours. Under the settlement, VLK agreed to repay $900,000 it received for the fraudulently billed claims, and VLK agreed to pay a civil penalty of $450,000.

The settlement was the result of a legacy Operation Enduring Freedom investigation conducted jointly by DCIS and Army Criminal Investigation Command. The investigation examined allegations that a DoD subcontractor inflated expenses for reimbursement. Wyle Laboratories, Inc. (Wyle) was awarded a delivery order under a DoD contract related to military working dogs in support of Army missions regarding explosives, improvised explosive devices, and enhanced threat detection.

Wyle employed VLK as a subcontractor to fulfill the delivery order and paid VLK based on the invoices that VLK submitted. Wyle submitted invoices to the DoD, and the DoD reimbursed Wyle for their claimed expenses, including for VLK's labor hours and other expenses.

From November 2012 through March 2013, VLK allegedly inflated the number of labor hours that were billed for training sessions that were held at VLK's Denver, Indiana facility and the Army's proving grounds in Yuma, Arizona. VLK also allegedly inflated the number of labor hours that were performed in Afghanistan by field service representatives, and VLK allegedly submitted inflated invoices for expenses such as dog food, labor, vehicle rentals, and lodging.

RETIRED ARMY GREEN BERET SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SENTENCED FOR STEALING GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, THEN DEBARRED.

On July 7, 2020, retired U.S. Army Sergeant First Class William Chamberlain, formerly of the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was sentenced in U.S. District Court to 36 months of probation, ordered to pay restitution of $40,000, and a special assessment of $200. Chamberlain was also ordered to forfeit $40,000, as specified in the court's order on July 7, 2020.

The sentencing was the result of a legacy Operation Enduring Freedom investigation conducted jointly by DCIS and Army Criminal Investigation Command. The investigation found that six U.S. military soldiers assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task

Force, in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, had purchased 86 money orders totaling $74,948 between October 2008 and April 2010. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service reviewed the money orders and found that 64 of the 86 money orders were made out to cash and endorsed by the soldiers who purchased them. The investigation uncovered a money laundering scheme the soldiers created to disguise stolen monies.

On July 17, 2020, the U.S. Army Procurement Fraud Division, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, debarred William Chamberlain from contracting with the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government for a period of five years, ending July 7, 2025. The Suspension and Debarment Official's decision to debar Chamberlain for longer than the usual 3 years was based on the seriousness of his crimes and the aggravating factors in this case.

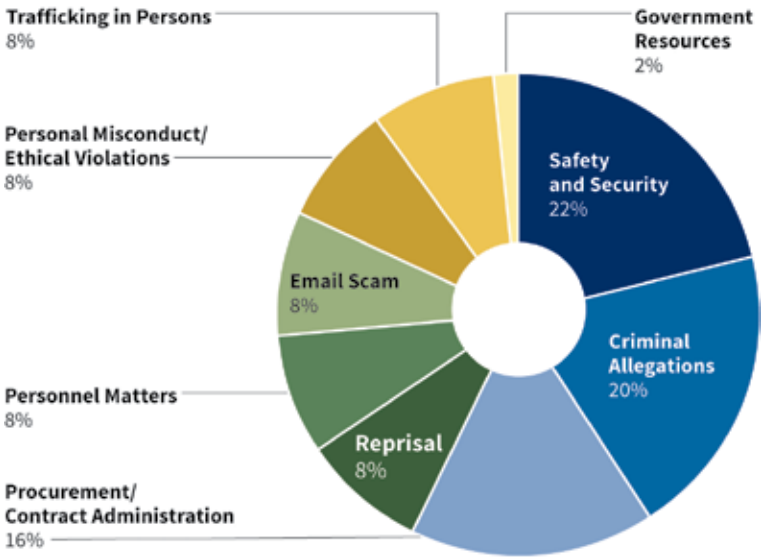
Hotline

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; or 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 DoD OIG investigator referred 71 cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations.

As noted in Figure 6, the majority of the cases opened during the reporting period were related to personal misconduct, reprisal, criminal allegations, and personnel matters.

Figure 6.

Hotline Activities



Kabul, Afghanistan (U.S. Army Reserve photo)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Classified Appendix to this Report 60

APPENDIX B
Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report 60

APPENDIX C
Ongoing OFS Oversight Projects 61

APPENDIX D
Planned OFS Oversight Projects 65

Acronyms 68

Map of Afghanistan 69

Endnotes 70

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 Inspectors General did not provide information for or participate in preparation of the classified appendix this quarter.

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's content was contributed by the three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG—and by partner oversight agencies. This report covers the period from July 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020.

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 independent 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 OIG, as the Lead IG for this operation, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, the DoS OIG, and the 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 OFS Oversight Projects

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

Table 4.

Ongoing Oversight Projects related to OFS by Lead IG Agency, as of September 30, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Evaluation of U.S. Central Command Kinetic Targeting Processes and Reporting Procedures To evaluate U.S. Central Command's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities. *Suspended due to coronavirus disease–2019. The project will restart when force health protection conditions permit.
Evaluation of DoD Processes to Counter Radio Controlled Improvised Explosive Devices To evaluate the DoD's processes to counter improvised explosive devices by using tactical jammers.
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 Combatant Command Counter Threat Finance Activities in Support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. European Command Priorities To determine whether U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, 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.
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.
Audit of Coalition Partner Reimbursements for Air Transportation Services in Afghanistan To determine whether the DoD sought full reimbursement for air transportation services provided to Coalition partners in Afghanistan in accordance with DoD policy and international agreements.
Evaluation of the U.S. Combatant Commands' Responses to the Coronavirus Disease–2019 To determine how U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, and their component commands executed pandemic response plans; and to identify the challenges encountered in implementing the response plans and the impact to operations resulting from the coronavirus disease–2019.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Department of State's Risk Assessments and Monitoring of Voluntary Contributions to International Organizations
To determine whether DoS policies, processes, and guidance for voluntary contributions ensure that 1) risks are identified, assessed, and responded to before providing funds to public international organizations; and 2) funds are monitored to achieve award objectives.

Audit of Department of State's Post Security Program Review Process
To determine whether the DoS Post Security Program Review process is sufficient to identify and resolve deficiencies in the management of selected posts' life safety, emergency preparedness, and information security programs.

Audit of the Use of Noncompetitive Contracts in Support of Overseas Contingency Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq
To determine whether acquisition policy was followed in awarding noncompetitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq; and 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.

Review of Department of State Preparations to Return Employees and Contractors to Federal Offices during the Global Coronavirus Pandemic
To describe DoS plans and procedures for returning employees to offices during the coronavirus pandemic and the methods outlined in those plans and procedures to ensure suitable safety and welfare considerations and precautions have been undertaken on behalf of employees and contractors.

Audit of the Department of State's Use of Undefinitized 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 Overseas Buildings Operations, Directorate of Operations, Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management
To evaluate whether the Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management effectively manages overseas posts' compliance with DoS safety, occupational health, and environmental management requirements; and to review the Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management's workplace, residential, and motor vehicle safety programs.

Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Directorate of Operations, Office of Fire Protection
To evaluate whether the Office of Fire Protection effectively directs and monitors overseas posts' compliance with the DoS fire protection program; and to review the Office of Fire Protection's inspection, safety, and prevention programs.

Inspection of the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisitions Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division
To 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 to assess the Office of Acquisition Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division's timeliness in executing contract awards and modifications.

Review of the Public Diplomacy Locally Employed Staff Initiative
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 the program's stakeholders.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Audit of USAID's Self-Reliance Initiative To determine whether USAID's self-reliance metrics have been incorporated into its development programming strategy; and to identify what challenges USAID faces in implementing development activities as envisioned under the Journey to Self-Reliance Initiative.
Audit of USAID's Initiative Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse To determine whether USAID took 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.
Audit of USAID's Risk Management and Project Prioritization in Afghanistan To determine whether USAID applied risk management in selecting staff positions and programs for reduction in Afghanistan.
Audit of USAID's Contract Termination Practices To assess USAID's procedures 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 5.

Ongoing Oversight Projects related to OFS by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of September 30, 2020

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION
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.
Department of Defense's Construction of Infrastructure for Women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces To identify DoD projects to build infrastructure supporting women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and determine how these projects were selected; assess the extent to which the DoD measured the success of these projects; and assess the extent to which facilities are being used for their intended purposes.
Department of Defense's End-Use Monitoring Efforts for Defense Articles Provided to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces To determine whether the DoD has, since FY 2017, implemented an end-use monitoring program in Afghanistan in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; conducted required routine and enhanced end-use monitoring of items provided to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces; and investigated and reported potential end-use violations in Afghanistan.
DoD Use of Funds Appropriated to Recruit and Retain Women in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces To identify the DoD's efforts to recruit, train, and retain women in the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces; to examine how the DoD selected specific incentives and initiatives to support those efforts and measured the results; and to determine the extent to which the efforts succeeded.
Inspection of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police Northern Electrical Interconnect Expansion Project in Kunduz To determine whether the design and construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and 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 inspect the Naiabad substation expansion and the construction of the new substation at Camp Shaheen. Specifically, to assess whether the work was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards; and the power system is being used and properly maintained.

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

U.S. Government Counter Threat Finance Efforts Against the Afghan Terrorist and Insurgent Narcotics Trade
To review the DoD's, the DoS's, the Department of Justice's, and the Department of the Treasury's counter threat financing efforts and funding in Afghanistan since 2017.

Building a Professional Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing
To examine whether the Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing have developed vetting policies and procedures that help identify corrupt and potentially corrupt personnel.

U.S. Accountability for Fuel Provisions to the Government of Afghanistan's Ministries of Defense and Interior Affairs
To determine the extent to which DoD has, since April 2018, acted upon SIGAR recommendations to review and assess fuel accountability, including coordinating with the Ministries of Defense and Interior Affairs; and planned to ensure accountability and oversight for Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces fuel provisions in the future.

Inspection of the Afghan National Army's Kabul National Military Hospital Elevator System Replacement
To assess whether the construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and the elevator system is being used and properly maintained.

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

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.

Review of Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment Towers
To evaluate what actions are being taken to develop Afghan equipment support capabilities for the RAID Tower platforms currently used by the Afghan National Army; to assess what effects a drawdown of U.S. troops would have on the mission capability of the RAID Towers currently deployed by the Afghan National Army, both immediately and in the long-term; and to evaluate the effectiveness of current field service support and end-use monitoring mechanisms for the RAID systems, and how they could be affected by a drawdown.

APPENDIX D
Planned OFS Oversight Projects

Tables 6 and 7 list the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies' planned oversight projects related to OFS.

Table 6.

Planned Oversight Projects related to OFS by Lead IG Agency, as of September 30, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Audit of the Department of Defense Military Payroll for Combat Zone Entitlements To determine whether the 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.
Evaluation of Tactical Signals Intelligence Processing To determine whether Theater Support Activity's tactical signals intelligence processing is sufficient to satisfy priority intelligence requirements. *Suspended due to coronavirus disease–2019. The project will restart when force health protection conditions permit.
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 provided training, maintenance, and supply chain management support services to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.
Audit of the U.S. Army Central Command's 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 U.S. Central Command area of responsibility is meeting mission goals.
Evaluation of U.S. Special Operations Command Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center To determine whether U.S. Special Operations Command's Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center provides U.S. combatant commanders the increased capability to conduct Internet-based information operations globally. *Suspended due to coronavirus disease–2019. The project will restart when force health protection conditions permit.
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.
Audit of Oversight of the Department of Defense Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II Contract In Afghanistan To determine whether the Army provided oversight of DoD Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II contractors in Afghanistan to ensure the contractors fulfilled requirements.
Follow up Audit of Army Oversight of Logistics Civil Augmentation Program V 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.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Audit of the Public Affairs Section's Grants at Embassy Kabul To determine whether the Public Affairs Office at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul is conducting oversight of its grants in accordance with Federal and DoS guidance.
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 anti-corruption considerations are integrated into USAID activities and how the agency monitors and responds to information about fraud that could affect its programs.

Table 7.

Planned Oversight Projects related to OFS by Lead IG Partner Agency, as of September 30, 2020

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 developed and validated the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces pharmaceutical, medical, and surgical materials needs; provided needed pharmaceutical, medical, and surgical materials supplies in accordance with DoD and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces requirements; and oversaw the proper storage, maintenance, and usage of supplies and equipment.
Inspection of Women's Participation Program–Afghan National Police Kabul Police Academy 2 To determine whether the construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and technical specifications; and the facility is being used and properly maintained.
Inspection of Afghan National Army Afghan Electrical Interconnect Electrical Infrastructure Marshal Fahim National Defense University/Darulaman/Commando To determine whether construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and technical specifications, and the facility is being used and properly maintained.
Inspection of Afghan National Army Afghan Electrical Interconnect Electrical Infrastructure Pol-i-Charkhi To determine whether construction was completed in accordance with contract requirements and technical specifications, and the facility is being used and properly maintained.
Audit of the Afghan National Army-Territorial Forces To determine whether U.S. Forces-Afghanistan evaluated and implemented the Afghan National Army-Territorial Forces (ANA-TF) program in accordance with guidance; ANA-TF members were being recruited, were mobilized, and were performing; and the ANA-TF program met cost expectations.
Audit of Accuracy of the Afghan Personnel and Pay System and Afghanistan Automated Biometric Identification System To determine if personnel records in Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) have an authentic biometric identification number, and the data within APPS and Afghanistan Automated Biometric Identification System agree; determine if sufficient controls are in place and working to mitigate the risk of ghost soldier records being created in APPS; and determine the prevalence of APPS eligible-for-pay individuals without an authentic biometric identification number, and the amount of funds going to possible ghost soldiers.

Audit of Afghan Special Security Forces–Training Program
To determine whether the Audit of 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.

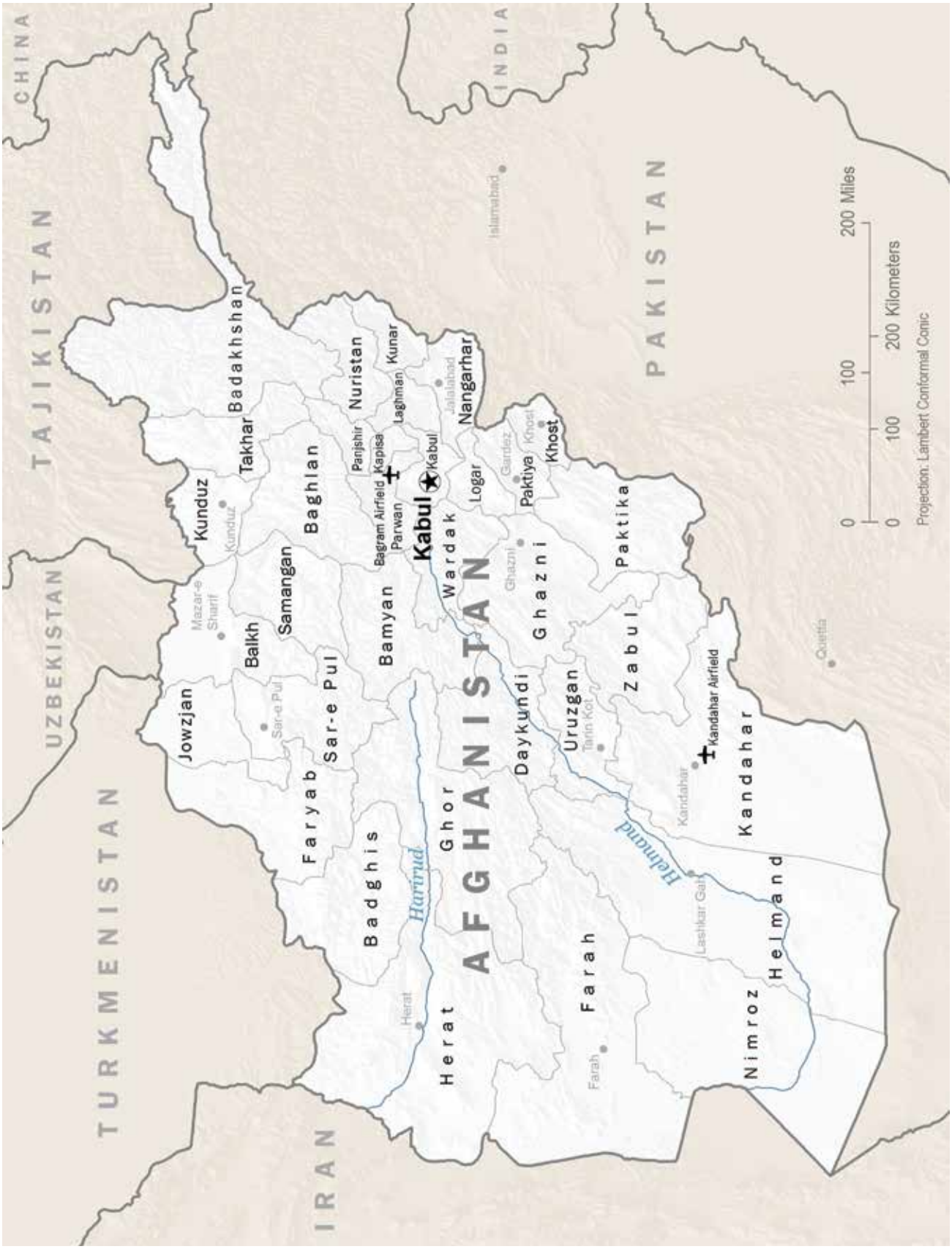
Unmanned Vehicle Compromise
To examine DoD assistance or training to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to help ensure that compromised intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets are properly accounted for and/or disposed.

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 anti-corruption controls have put in place to increase customs revenue collection ad their effectiveness.

ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AAF	Afghan Air Force
ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANA-TF	Afghan National Army Territorial Force
ANASOC	Afghan National Army Special Operations Command
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
ANP	Afghan National Police
AQIS	Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
ASFF	Afghan Security Forces Fund
ASSF	Afghan Special Security Forces
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CMS	case management system
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease-2019
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan
DEWS	Disease Early Warning System
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DoS INL	DoS Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
EUM	end use monitoring
FY	fiscal year
IDP	internally displaced person
IG	Inspector General
ISIS-K	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General

Acronym	
Lead IG agencies	DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMS-GVS	National Maintenance Strategy–Ground Vehicle Support
NSOCC-A	NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCO	overseas contingency operation
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OUSD(P)	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
PPE	personal protective equipment
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SMW	Special Mission Wing
TAA	train, advise, and assist
TAAC	Train, Advise, and Assist Command
TAAC-Air	Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Air
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USFOR-A	United States Forces-Afghanistan
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization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ENDNOTES

Executive Summary

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U.S. Air Force Airmen get the chance to practice their extrication skills in the dark during a training session. (DoD photo)

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TO REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, OR ABUSE RELATED TO OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS, CONTACT:

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