



OFS IN BRIEF

The 26th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) summarizes the events that took place in Afghanistan this quarter, including the U.S. withdrawal from the country and the fall of the Afghan government, as well as oversight of programs supporting the U.S. Government's mission in Afghanistan.

“The war was a strategic failure.”

–General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Taliban Deals Military and Political Defeat to the Afghan Government

pp. 6–7, 10–19

- After years of consolidating power in rural areas, the Taliban launched its **final push** into **major cities**.
- The Taliban employed a combination of **military offensives** and **negotiated surrenders** of local officials in its rout of the Afghan government forces.
- As the Afghan forces broke and fled, the Taliban **acquired** their **weapons**, including heavy artillery, and **released** Taliban fighters from **prisons**.
- In **10 days**, the Taliban took control of **Kabul** and almost every **provincial capital**.
- On **August 15**, Afghan President Ghani **fled the country**, and his **government collapsed** as the Taliban entered the capital.

Factors Contributing to the Sudden Afghan Military Collapse

pp. 20–24

There were many reasons why the U.S.-trained and -equipped Afghan military broke under Taliban pressure, including:

- U.S. advisors employing an **American institutional model** rather than tailoring one to Afghanistan's specific needs and culture.
- An Afghan military, especially the Air Force, that was **overly dependent on U.S. contractors**;
- **Misuse** of specialized troops and **insufficient training** of the Afghan National Army;
- The **Taliban's preparedness** and resilience; and
- Steadily **decreasing U.S. troop numbers**, despite increasing Taliban violence and stalled peace talks.

Oversight and Investigations

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- The DoD OIG opened an evaluation of the **U.S. airstrike** that **killed 10 Afghan civilians**, including children, in the final days of the evacuation.
- The DoS OIG announced a review of the Afghanistan **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)** program.

U.S. Mission Shifts Focus to Noncombatant Evacuations

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- On August 15, the DoD deployed **5,000 additional troops** to facilitate evacuation efforts.
- U.S. forces **cooperated with the Taliban** on security at Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA).
- The airlift by U.S. and partner nations ultimately transported **124,000 people** on more than **387 flights** in less than **3 weeks**.
- An ISIS-K suicide bombing at HKIA killed **13 U.S. troops** and more than **150 civilians**.
- An unknown number of U.S. citizens and “the majority” of SIV-eligible Afghans were **left behind**.

DoS Increased Processing for SIVs

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- SIVs are available to Afghans who **worked with the U.S. Government** (and their families) and who are at serious risk because of that employment.
- Congress **tripled** the number of SIVs for FY 2021 from **4,000 to 12,000**.
- SIV-eligible Afghans who were evacuated have been **moved to DoD installations** in the United States and other countries to complete their visa processing.
- All SIV applicants and their families are **vettted** through an interagency process, assessing both **biometric** and **biographic** data.

Taliban Forms Interim Government

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- Several cabinet members are under **U.S. and international sanctions**, including Minister of Interior Affairs Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is on the FBI's most wanted terrorists list.
- The Taliban imposed **restrictions on women** in public life, including education, and reinstated its **morality police** of the 1990s.
- The Taliban remains closely linked with **al-Qaeda**.
- As of the publication of this report, the U.S. Government had **not taken a position** on whether to recognize a government in Afghanistan.