

SIGAR

**Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction**

SIGAR 19-36 Inspection Report

**Kang Border Patrol Headquarters: Construction
Generally Met Contract Requirements, but
Deficiencies Exist, and the \$5.2 Million Project Has
Not Been Used or Maintained**



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SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

April 30, 2019

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This report discusses the results of SIGAR's inspection of the Kang Border Patrol headquarters in Nimroz Province. In August 2011, the U.S. Air Force's 772nd Enterprise Sourcing Squadron, in support of the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, now the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC), awarded a \$26.9 million cost-plus-fixed-fee task order to United Research Services Group Inc. (URS) to design and construct four compounds for the Afghan Border Police, one of which was the Kang Border Patrol headquarters. The task order required URS to construct 29 buildings and support facilities, such as an administration building, two barracks, a warehouse, and guard shacks and towers; 3 utility systems, including a power plant and electrical distribution system; and roads. On February 28, 2013, the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) transferred the completed Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound, which cost \$5.2 million to construct, to the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI), which oversees the Afghan Border Police.

During our site visits to the Kang headquarters compound, we could access only the 3 utility systems and 18 of the 29 buildings and support facilities. We found that URS built those buildings, facilities, and utility systems as required by the task order. However, we identified four instances where URS did not comply with the contract requirements. Specifically, URS did not (1) place native crushed stone around the Kang Border Patrol headquarters buildings; (2) apply finishing coats of paint to the entry gates, guard towers, and fuel storage tank canopy; (3) install trenches for the stormwater system; or (4) install safety components on the fuel storage tanks.

In addition, we could not fully assess the extent of AFCEC's project oversight because neither it nor its contractors maintained contract documents. Moreover, Henningson Durham Richardson Environment Operations and Construction Inc., the contractor responsible for oversight, acknowledged that it did not effectively oversee the project because of security concerns near the Kang headquarters compound.



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Since its completion in February 2013, the newly constructed Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound has never been used. On March 31, 2019, the Kang commander told us the MOI does not have plans to use the newly constructed buildings and facilities, which indicates that this \$5.2 million compound has been a waste of U.S. taxpayers' money. Despite never being used, the new construction is starting to deteriorate because of lack of maintenance. In addition, we found that the electrical and potable water systems were not being used. We also identified nine counterfeit fire extinguishers, but could not determine whether URS installed them or whether it installed authentic fire extinguishers that were later replaced.

Because the Afghan government is now responsible for operating and maintaining the Kang headquarters compound, we are not making any recommendations in this report.

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. Neither CSTC-A nor AFCEC provided official written comments. However, they did provide technical comments, which we incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

SIGAR conducted this work under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; and in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ABP | Afghan Border Police |
| AFCEC | Air Force Civil Engineer Center |
| CSTC-A | Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan |
| HDR | Henningson Durham Richardson Environment Operations and Construction Inc. |
| MOI | Ministry of Interior |
| URS | United Research Services Group Inc. |

The Afghan Ministry of Interior's (MOI) Afghan Border Police (ABP) are responsible for maintaining Afghanistan's borders and controlling entry and exit at border checkpoints.¹ The MOI has recognized that it needs ongoing assistance from the international community to build and maintain compounds, buildings, and support facilities for the ABP.

On August 22, 2011, the U.S. Air Force's 772nd Enterprise Sourcing Squadron, in support of the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, now the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC),² awarded a \$26.9 million cost-plus-fixed-fee task order to United Research Services Group Inc. (URS).³ Under the task order, URS was required to design and construct three ABP headquarters at Burjas, Kang, and Taba-e Talib and a border crossing point at Zarang, all in Nimroz Province (see figure 1).⁴ In addition, on September 1, 2011, the squadron awarded a \$1.6 million time-and-materials task order to Henningson Durham Richardson Environmental Operations and Construction Inc. (HDR), an American company, to provide quality assurance supervision and oversight services for the border patrol headquarters projects.

Figure 1 - Location of Kang Border Patrol Headquarters in Afghanistan



Source: SIGAR analysis.

¹ In December 2017, the Afghan government moved most of the ABP staff who provide border security outside of the Afghan border crossing checkpoints and airports from the MOI to the Ministry of Defense and renamed those personnel the Afghan Border Force. About 4,000 ABP personnel who conduct customs operations at its border crossing areas remain with the MOI.

² In October 2012, the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment was reorganized as AFCEC.

³ The task order was number 30 under contract number FA8903-06-D-8520. On October 17, 2014, AECOM Technical Services Inc. acquired URS.

⁴ The Taba-e Talib headquarters was de-scoped from the URS task order.

This inspection focused on the newly constructed compound at the Kang Border Patrol headquarters. The task order required URS to construct 29 buildings and support facilities, 3 utility systems, and roads for 100 personnel. These included an administration building; two barracks; a dining facility; a toilet, ablution, shower, and laundry building;⁵ a warehouse; a secure storage facilities building; two guard shacks; four guard towers; a well house; a water storage tank; a power plant and electrical distribution system; a sanitary sewer collection system; a potable water and distribution system; and a road network within and an access road to the compound. The Kang project contract cost was \$5.2 million.

AFCEC modified the contract to extend the project's completion date from February 18, 2012, to October 28, 2012. On February 15, 2013, AFCEC transferred the Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), and on February 28, 2013, CSTC-A transferred it to the Afghan government, with the warranty expiring 1 year later.

The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether the Kang Border Patrol headquarters (1) was constructed in accordance with the task order's requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) is being used and maintained. However, lack of access to 11 of the 29 buildings and facilities and incomplete contract records limited the scope of this inspection.

We conducted our work in Kabul and at the Kang Border Patrol headquarters in Nimroz Province, Afghanistan, from March 2017 through April 2019, in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Our professional engineers conducted the engineering assessment in accordance with the National Society of Professional Engineers' *Code of Ethics for Engineers*. Appendix I contains a discussion of our scope and methodology.

THE KANG BORDER PATROL HEADQUARTERS HAS FOUR CONSTRUCTION DEFICIENCIES, BUT INCOMPLETE CONTRACT RECORDS AND LACK OF ACCESS TO ALL FACILITIES PREVENTED A FULL ASSESSMENT OF URS'S COMPLIANCE AND AFCEC'S OVERSIGHT

URS's Noncompliance Resulted in Four Construction Deficiencies, Some Posing Safety Concerns

During our August 26, 2017, site visit to the Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound, we found that URS had completed all of the required construction in 8 of 17 buildings, 10 of 12 support facilities, and 3 utility systems we could access (see appendix II). We could not assess the other 11 buildings and support facilities to determine contract compliance and AFCEC's oversight.

On February 26, 2019, we made a follow-up call to an ABP official at the Kang Border Police headquarters to get an update on the use of the buildings, facilities, and utility systems. He said the buildings and facilities that we could not access in 2017 remained locked and ABP personnel did not have the keys to open them.

The 8 buildings, 10 support facilities, and 3 utility systems we did inspect were generally constructed according to task order requirements. However, we found four construction deficiencies where URS did not comply with the requirements and specifications, and some deficiencies pose safety concerns (see table 1).

⁵ Police at the compound could use the ablution area to wash their hands, feet, and face in preparation for prayer.

Table 1 - Construction Deficiencies SIGAR Found at the Kang Border Patrol Headquarters

| Deficiency | Description |
|---|--|
| 1. URS did not install safety components on the fuel storage tanks. | The task order required URS to install four fuel storage tanks with a distribution system. The tanks required safety components such as an overfill alarm system and tank vent. Each tank was also required to have an automatic analog reading gauge directly mounted to the tank's access cover. During our site visit, we found that URS did not install these safety components. The lack of an overfill alarm system on the fuel tanks creates a safety hazard because fuel could exceed capacity and spill out of the tanks. In addition, the lack of vents could cause pressure to build, which could cause the tanks to rupture and spill fuel in the area. As a result, a spark in the vicinity could cause an explosion and fire, thereby risking injury to nearby personnel. Although the as-built drawings show that URS installed the overfill alarm systems and tank vents, HDR did not discover the deficiencies during its oversight activities. |
| 2. URS did not install trenches for the stormwater system. | The task order required URS to develop a drainage plan for all site work, including excavating and filling in uneven ground surfaces. The intent was to eliminate all earthen mounds, unnecessary ditches, sinkholes, and any other obstacles that would constrain surface water runoff, create erosion, and look unsightly. In addition, the existing storm water management system was to be incorporated into the new plan to ensure that the headquarters installation had an efficient drainage system and to ensure that redundant work was not performed. However, during our site visit we found that URS did not construct trenches along the east and west sides of the roads and around the buildings, as the task order required. The lack of trenches for the stormwater system may result in ponding rainwater, thereby causing damage to structures, buildings, and roads. Although the contractor's as-built drawings show that the stormwater system's trenches were constructed, limited documentation prevented us from estimating the cost of the trenches, and HDR did not discover the deficiency during its oversight activities. |
| 3. URS did not apply finishing coats of paint to the entry control point gates, guard towers, and fuel storage tank canopy. | The task order required URS to apply two coats of metal primer and two coats of finishing paint to the entry control point gates, guard towers, and fuel storage tank canopy. The task order also stated that the AFCEC contracting officer's representative would select the final paint color from the samples URS provided. We found that URS did not apply the two coats of finishing paint to the entry control point gates, the guard towers, or the fuel storage tank canopy. We observed that the layer of paint present was a red, anti-corrosion primer coat, and the final coats of finishing paint that would normally have a polished appearance was missing. However, limited documentation prevented us from estimating the cost of the two coats of finishing paint. AFCEC's quality assurance report did not mention the absence of the finishing coats of paint. |
| 4. URS did not place the native crushed stone around the Kang Border Patrol headquarters buildings. | The task order required URS to place native crushed stone around all of the buildings and along foot traffic areas and roads to reduce erosion and control dust. However, during our site visit, we did not find native crushed stone around any of the buildings and roads. Instead, we found that all of the buildings had river aggregate applied around them. River aggregate is normally used in landscaping for aesthetic purposes. However, limited documentation prevented us from determining the cost difference between the two types of stones. We reviewed task order modifications, but did not find that AFCEC approved URS's substituting river aggregate for native crushed stone. |

Source: SIGAR site visit and analysis of task order documents.

^a River aggregate is smaller than native crushed stone and is known for its attractive appearance. River aggregate is commonly used in aboveground applications such as walkways and as a base for patios. Native crushed stone is normally used as a base for roads, concrete blocks, and drainage.

Lack of Access to 11 Buildings and Facilities and Incomplete Contract Documents Prevented SIGAR from Fully Assessing URS’s Compliance with the Task Order and AFCEC’s Oversight

As stated previously, we could access only 8 of the 17 buildings at the Kang Border Patrol headquarters: the dining facility, kitchen annex building, storage building, pump house, two guard towers, and two guard shacks. We found nine buildings locked, and the ABP did not have keys to them. These buildings were the administration building; senior barrack; open-bay barrack; toilet, ablution, shower, and laundry building; warehouse; petroleum, oil, and lubricant building; two guard towers, and one guard shack. Additionally, we could access the utility systems and only 10 of the 12 support facilities. In total, we could not access 11 of the 29 buildings and facilities to fully assess URS’s compliance with the task order requirements or HDR’s quality assurance supervision and oversight services performed for this project.

AFCEC did not retain all required contract documentation. The Federal Acquisition Regulation requires agencies to retain contract documentation for 6 years after final payment.⁶ Contract and administrative oversight information is critical for agencies to ensure that contractors are compliant. Since March 2017, we have requested but not received task order administration and oversight documents such as URS’s approved quality control plan, material inspection and receiving reports, approved material submittals, warranty plans and inspections, and final inspection reports. HDR, AFCEC’s quality assurance contractor, stated that it did not have on-site inspectors monitoring the construction work for several months because of security concerns in the area. As a result, HDR reported that it could not achieve effective oversight and did not provide AFCEC with all of the required quality assurance progress reports listed above.

AFCEC also did not follow its own quality assurance procedures, which required the contractor to maintain all project documentation. The requirement exists to give project stakeholders—the quality assurance contractor, the contracting officer’s representative, and the contracting officer—timely access to all project information. In addition, during project closeout, the quality assurance procedures required the construction and quality assurance contractors to give AFCEC discs or external hard drives containing all project documentation, which they did not do. As a result, AFCEC did not have the contract administration and oversight documents either.

THE NEW KANG BORDER PATROL HEADQUARTERS BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES HAVE NOT BEEN USED SINCE CONSTRUCTION WAS COMPLETED IN 2013, AND ARE NOT BEING MAINTAINED

During our August 2017 site visit, we found that none of the Kang Border Patrol headquarters’ 29 newly constructed buildings and support facilities were being used. According to the Kang commander, the MOI decided not to use the new construction at the compound as a border patrol headquarters, but he did not provide a reason. As a result, the new construction has never been used since it was completed in February 2013 (see photo 1).

⁶ Federal Acquisition Regulation 4.805.

However, we found the compound was occupied by an ABP commander and six personnel assigned to provide security at the compound to prevent unauthorized entry and theft. They are not using any of URS's newly constructed buildings and support facilities, but instead are operating out of the old headquarters building inside the compound. Although CSTC-A stated that the Kang compound is operational and police units are stationed there, we followed up with the Kang commander and other ABP personnel at the compound, and on February 26, 2019, they told us the newly constructed facilities are still not being used. The seven ABP personnel continue to use the old headquarters building at Kang. During our March 31, 2019, follow-up site visit, we confirmed that the new facilities have never been used and continue to deteriorate because of lack of maintenance. In addition, the Kang commander told us the MOI did not have plans to use the newly constructed buildings and facilities.

We also found that the power plant and electrical distribution system, and the potable water and distribution system were not being used. The Kang headquarters compound is almost 12.5 miles from the city of Nimroz and is not connected to the local power grid. Even if the ABP was using the power plant and electrical distribution system, the compound does not have any fuel to operate the generators in the plant. However, the Afghan government installed a solar panel that can provide electricity for lighting as an alternative. Further, since there is no potable water supply on the compound, trucks deliver water from Nimroz.

During our site visit, we found cracks along the exterior walls of the storage building (208) and open-bay barrack (204). In addition, the exterior walls of several buildings needed repainting. We did not find any maintenance issues in the interiors of the eight buildings that we had inspected. However, we did find nine counterfeit fire extinguishers in those buildings and noted that two fire extinguishers were missing. The task order required URS to install 38 wall-mounted, multipurpose fire extinguishers throughout the Kang compound. For the eight buildings that we could access and inspect, the task order required 11 fire extinguishers. Due to limited documentation from AFCEC, we could not determine whether URS did not install the required extinguishers at all or those it installed were later replaced.⁷ We also found that two fire extinguishers were missing from their required locations; we could not determine whether they were installed and later removed or never installed. These counterfeit and missing fire extinguishers present a safety hazard, which could result in injury or death should a fire occur. As noted earlier, we could not inspect the interiors of the other nine buildings, such as a guard shack, administration building, and senior barrack, because they were locked.

CSTC-A told us the Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound is covered by an on-budget operation, maintenance, and repair contract that the command is funding. However, during our site visits we found no evidence that maintenance has been performed, and no ABP personnel are assigned to perform maintenance.

Photo 1 - Unused Buildings at the Kang Border Patrol Headquarters



Source: SIGAR, March 31, 2019

⁷ AFCEC could not give us the product literature showing what brand of fire extinguisher it approved for URS to purchase or the estimated cost. Nonetheless, we determined that the nine fire extinguishers were counterfeit because they each had a two-piece cylinder with seams instead of a one-piece cylinder with no seams and blue instead of black hose nozzles. In addition, eight of the fire extinguishers had the same serial number—AH-18855—instead of a unique serial number for each extinguisher.

CONCLUSION

AFCEC provided the ABP with a border patrol headquarters in Kang that generally met contract requirements, based on the buildings, facilities, and utility systems that we could access and inspect. We found four construction deficiencies, several that pose safety concerns, such as the absence of an overflow alarm system and tank vent for the fuel tanks. However, it is too late for the United States to recover funds from URS or require corrective action because the contract's warranty period has expired and the MOI has assumed responsibility for the compound's operation and maintenance.

Due to AFCEC's incomplete recordkeeping and our inability to access all of the buildings, we could not fully assess the extent to which URS deviated from the task order. As a result, additional deficiencies might exist. Further, although we could not fully assess the extent of AFCEC's project oversight, HDR, its quality assurance contractor, acknowledged that it did not provide effective project oversight because of poor security conditions. We acknowledge that HDR's statement that security issues in the Kang area affected oversight activities. AFCEC also did not comply with the Federal Acquisition Regulation or its own instruction, which require agencies to retain contract documentation for 6 years after final payment. Such information is critical for agencies to ensure documentation is available to verify that contract requirements are being met.

Because the new border patrol headquarters buildings and support facilities have never been used, and the MOI does not currently have plans to use them, CSTC-A appears to have wasted \$5.2 million in U.S. funds. In addition, the compound is showing signs of deterioration due to a lack of maintenance, the electrical and potable water supply systems are not being used, and there are counterfeit and missing fire extinguishers, all of which further jeopardize the U.S. investment in the new border patrol headquarters.

Because the Afghan government has been responsible for operating and maintaining the compound for more than 5 years, we are not making any recommendations in this report.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. Neither CSTC-A nor AFCEC provided official written comments. However, they did provide technical comments, which we incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

APPENDIX I - SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of SIGAR's inspection of the Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound in Nimroz Province. The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether the new compound (1) was constructed in accordance with the task order's requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) is being used and maintained. Specifically, we:

- reviewed the task order and modifications, pre-approved design submittals, site visit reports, building codes, and other relevant project documentation;
- reviewed Federal Acquisition Regulation 4.8, "Government Contract Files";
- conducted engineering assessments of the project drawings and completed construction;
- interviewed U.S. and Afghan government officials concerning the project's construction; and
- made a site visit on August 26, 2017 and March 31, 2019.

The scope of our inspection was limited because we could access only 11 of the 29 buildings and facilities constructed under the task order, and did not receive all required documentation on the task order.

We did not rely on computer-processed data in conducting this inspection. However, we considered the impact of compliance with laws and fraud risk.

In December 2014, SIGAR entered into a cooperative agreement with Afghan civil society partners. Under this agreement, our Afghan partners conduct specific inspections, evaluations, and other analyses. In this regard, Afghan engineers inspected the Kang Border Patrol headquarters facilities in August 2017. We developed a standardized engineering evaluation checklist covering items required by the contract and design/specification documents. Our checklist required our partners to analyze the contract documents, scope of work, technical specifications, and design drawings.

We compared the information our Afghan civil society partners provided to accepted engineering practices, relevant standards, regulations, laws, and codes for quality and accuracy. In addition, as part of our monitoring and quality control process, we:

- met with the Afghan engineers to ensure that the approach and planning for the inspection were consistent with the objectives of our inspection and the terms of our cooperative agreement;
- attended periodic meetings with our partners, and conducted our normal entrance and exit conferences with agency officials;
- discussed significant inspection issues with them;
- monitored our partners' progress in meeting milestones and revised contract delivery dates as needed; and
- conducted oversight of them in accordance with SIGAR's policies and procedures to ensure that their work resulted in impartial, credible, and reliable information.

We conducted our inspection work in Kabul and Kang, Afghanistan, from February 2017 through April 2019. This work was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Our professional engineers conducted the engineering assessment in accordance with the National Society of Professional Engineers' *Code of Ethics for Engineers*. We conducted this inspection under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

APPENDIX II - LIST OF KANG BORDER PATROL HEADQUARTERS COMPOUND BUILDINGS, SUPPORT FACILITIES, AND UTILITY SYSTEMS

Table 2 lists the buildings, support facilities, and utility systems required under the Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound task order, and identifies what we could access and inspect during our February 2017 site visit.

Table 2 - Kang Border Patrol Headquarters Compound Buildings, Support Facilities, and Utility Systems

| Number | Description | Quantity Required | Quantity Inspected |
|---|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| BUILDINGS | | | |
| 200 | Administration | 1 | 0 |
| 201 | Dining Facility | 1 | 1 |
| 202 | Outside Kitchen | 1 | 1 |
| 203 | Senior Barrack | 1 | 0 |
| 204 | Open-Bay Barrack | 1 | 0 |
| 207 | Toilet, Ablution, Shower, and Laundry | 1 | 0 |
| 208 | Secure Storage | 1 | 1 |
| 209 | Warehouse | 1 | 0 |
| 210 | Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricant | 1 | 0 |
| 213 | Pump House Container | 1 | 1 |
| 217a-d | Guard Towers | 4 | 2 |
| 218a-b | Guard Shacks | 2 | 1 |
| 219 | Guard House | 1 | 1 |
| Total Buildings | | 17 | 8 |
| SUPPORT FACILITIES | | | |
| 211 | Generator Building | 1 | 1 |
| 212 | Fuel Storage Tank Canopy | 1 | 1 |
| 214 | Water Tank | 1 | 1 |
| 215 | Holding Tank | 1 | 1 |
| 220a | Trash Point | 1 | 1 |
| 220b | Trash Point | 1 | 1 |
| 221 | Primary Entry Control Point with Canopy | 1 | 1 |
| 222 | Secondary Entry Control Point | 1 | 1 |
| 223 | Car Parking | 1 | 1 |
| 224 | Truck Parking | 1 | 0 |
| 225 | Force Protection Wall | 1 | 1 |
| 226 | Assembly Area | 1 | 0 |
| Total Support Facilities | | 12 | 10 |
| Total Buildings and Support Facilities | | 29 | 18 |
| UTILITY SYSTEMS | | | |
| - | Power Plant and Electrical Distribution System | 1 | 1 |
| - | Potable Water and Distribution System | 1 | 1 |
| - | Sanitary Sewer Collection System | 1 | 1 |
| Total Utility Systems | | 3 | 3 |

Source: SIGAR analysis of Kang Border Patrol headquarters compound task order.

APPENDIX III - ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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