SIGAR

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

SIGAR 20-45 Inspection Report

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

JULY

2020

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense

General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr.
Commander, U.S. Central Command

General Austin Scott Miller
Commander, U.S. Forces–Afghanistan and
Commander, Resolute Support

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Lieutenant General E. John Deedrick Jr.
Commander, Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan

This report discusses the results of SIGAR's inspection of security and access upgrades at the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) headquarters complex in Kabul. In December 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded a $2.4 million firm-fixed-price contract to Abdulhai Gardezi Construction Firm (ACF), an Afghan construction company, to complete upgrades at the complex. The upgrades included constructing a new entry control point (ECP) building to screen visitors to MOI headquarters, seven drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks, and a parking lot, as well as installing concrete barriers and street lighting, and road improvements. USACE and ACF modified the contract seven times, ultimately increasing the award amount by about $21,500 and extending the completion date from July 23, 2018, to January 21, 2019.

During our site visits in February and May 2020, we found that ACF generally completed the upgrades according to the contract requirements. However, we identified three construction deficiencies involving (1) a concrete barrier at risk of falling over, (2) a noncompliant ground cable, and (3) card readers not installed at turnstiles in the ECP building's entry and exit points. We also found that a lack of operation and maintenance has created additional safety or security concerns, including nonworking streetlights, missing panic bars and unauthorized exterior padlocks on ECP building exit doors, and damage to a guard shack roof.

We are making two recommendations in this report. We recommend that the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Commander (1) notify the MOI of the three construction deficiencies—the concrete barrier at risk of falling over, noncompliant ground cable, and uninstalled card readers—so the MOI is aware of them and can take whatever action it deems appropriate, and (2) notify the MOI of the operation and maintenance problems—nonworking streetlights, missing panic bars and unauthorized exterior padlocks on ECP building exit doors, and damage to a guard shack roof—so the ministry can take whatever action it deems appropriate to correct them.

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. CSTC-A and USACE provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendices II and III, respectively. In response to the recommendations, CSTC-A stated it verbally advised the MOI of the three construction and three operation and maintenance concerns cited in the report. USACE did not concur with either recommendation, and requested that we direct them to CSTC-A because USACE was the execution agent under the contract and CSTC-A was the

project's sponsor. We agreed and redirected the recommendations to CSTC-A. As a result of CSTC-A's actions, we will close both recommendations as implemented upon issuance of this report.

We conducted this inspection 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.

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Abdulhai Gardezi Construction Firm
ECP	entry control point
MOI	Ministry of Interior
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

On December 31, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded Abdulhai Gardezi Construction Firm (ACF), an Afghan construction company, a $2.4 million firm-fixed-price contract to complete security and access upgrades at the Ministry of Interior (MOI) headquarters complex in Kabul.[1] The upgrades included constructing a new entry control point (ECP) building to screen visitors, seven drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks, and a parking lot, as well as installing concrete barriers and street lighting, and road improvements. USACE issued ACF a notice to proceed on January 29, 2017, with a required completion date of July 23, 2018.

USACE and ACF modified the contract seven times, ultimately increasing the award amount by about $21,500 and extending the completion date to January 21, 2019. The modifications included removing existing underground concrete foundations, increasing the depths of new electrical manholes, relocating an existing manhole, fixing a water line, and de-scoping one of the seven drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks.

USACE conducted a pre-final inspection on July 2, 2018, and determined that the work associated with the parking lot, surrounding concrete barriers, and the road and street lighting improvements were sufficiently complete to allow the Afghan government to start utilizing them on July 10, 2018. The 1-year warranty on these items started on July 10, 2018. USACE conducted a final inspection for the remaining contract items—52 Jersey barriers, the ECP building, and 6 drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks—on March 5, 2019, and their 1-year warranties started that day.[2]

The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether (1) the upgrades were completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) the facilities are being used as intended and maintained.

We conducted our work in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Arlington, Virginia, from November 2019 through May 2020, in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The engineering assessment was conducted by our professional engineers in accordance with the National Society of Professional Engineers' *Code of Ethics for Engineers*. Appendix I has a discussion of our scope and methodology.

ACF GENERALLY COMPLETED UPGRADES AT THE MOI HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX IN ACCORDANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS, BUT THREE CONSTRUCTION DEFICIENCIES EXIST

We visited the MOI headquarters complex six times in February and May 2020, and found that ACF generally constructed the security upgrades according to the contract requirements. For example, ACF constructed the new ECP building, drop-arm checkpoints, guard shacks, and parking lot as required. However, we found three construction deficiencies that resulted from ACF not complying with contract requirements:

1. A concrete barrier was at risk of falling over.
2. ACF installed a noncompliant ground cable.
3. ACF did not install card readers at turnstiles in the ECP building's entry and exit points.

The warranty on the noncompliant ground cable and missing card readers expired on March 5, 2020. We notified USACE of its deficiencies following our February 2020 site visits so USACE could act before the warranty expired.[3] The warranty on the concrete barrier expired on July 10, 2019, before this inspection began.

[1] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Contract W5J9JE-17-C-0002: Ministry of Interior Headquarters, Entry Control Point's Parking and Lighting, Kabul Province, Afghanistan.

[2] A Jersey barrier is a concrete slab that is 32 inches high with slanted sides. Jersey barriers are typically used to block or reroute traffic.

[3] We also notified USACE about two counterfeit fire extinguishers found in the ECP building.

A Concrete Barrier Is at Risk of Falling Over

One of the concrete barriers surrounding the parking lot was at risk of falling over (see photo 1). We conducted an initial site visit on February 5, 2020, and a follow-up visit on May 21, 2020, to more closely inspect the ground around the unstable concrete barrier. We found that the soil surrounding the unstable concrete barrier had weakened, and adjacent concrete barriers were also leaning (see photo 2). An MOI official said the ministry notified ACF about the unstable concrete barrier before the project's completion.

Based on our engineering assessment, we determined that the concrete barrier became unstable for two reasons. First, ACF did not properly compact the soil, as required under the contract.[4] Second, the soil around the barriers weakened due to rainwater draining from the parking lot through the concrete barrier's drainage hole at ground level and into the nearby drainage ditch.[5] If not addressed, the unstable concrete barrier could fall over, damaging the surrounding storm ditches and potentially causing serious injury to anyone nearby.

Photo 1 - Unstable Concrete Barrier

Source: SIGAR, May 21, 2020

Photo 2 - Adjacent Leaning Concrete Barriers

Source: SIGAR, May 21, 2020

A Noncompliant Ground Cable Was Installed in the New Manhole

The contract required that "wires and cables manufactured more than 12 months prior to date of delivery to site shall not be used."[6] During our February 20, 2020, site visit, we found that ACF installed a noncompliant ground cable in the new electrical manhole in front of the ECP building. The cable was dated December 23, 2013 (see photo 3), but ACF did not complete the project until March 5, 2019, more than 5 years later. Aging cables are a main cause of electrical cable failure and may lead to reduced conductivity.

None of the ECP Turnstiles Had Card Readers

Contract requirements called for ACF to install card readers on both sides of all three turnstiles located at the entry and exit of the ECP building. The card readers help ensure that only authorized personnel can access the MOI headquarters complex, a location that has been the site of insurgent attacks in recent years.

[4] The contract required concrete barriers to be placed on either paved areas or surfaces comprised of a minimum of 150 mm (6 inches) of compacted aggregate base course material (compacted to 95 percent maximum dry density standards).

[5] Per the approved grading plan, the parking lot's slope was designed so rainwater would flow toward the affected concrete barrier and into the adjacent drainage ditch.

[6] Contract Specification Section 26 20 00, paragraph 2.6.

While the as-built drawings showed that the card readers were installed as required, during our site visit on February 10, 2020, we did not find any card readers on the turnstiles, or any evidence that they had been installed and then removed (see photo 4). We also found no evidence that card readers had ever been approved, purchased, or turned over to the MOI. Without card readers, the building's security is compromised.

Photo 3 - Noncompliant Ground Cable

Source: SIGAR, February 20, 2020

Photo 4 - Missing Card Readers on Turnstile

Source: SIGAR, February 10, 2020

LACK OF SUFFICIENT ELECTRICAL POWER AND MAINTENANCE HAS CREATED THREE POTENTIAL SAFETY HAZARDS, AND THE MOI IS NOT USING ALL OF THE SECURITY UPGRADES

We found three potential safety hazards due to insufficient electrical power and inadequate maintenance. First, 85 of the 90 streetlights did not work because the MOI has not taken corrective actions recommended by ACF to make them operational. Second, the ECP building's exit doors were missing panic bars, and some had unauthorized, non-compliant locks installed from the outside. Third, the MOI damaged the roof on a guard shack while relocating it and has not repaired the damage. In addition, we found that the MOI was not using all of the upgrades. For example, the MOI was not using the ECP building for security screening.

Eighty-five of the 90 Streetlights Did Not Work

We found that 85 of the 90 streetlights at the MOI headquarters complex did not work (see photo 5). On July 10, 2018, ACF notified USACE that some streetlights had stopped working. The notification letter described that ACF's investigation into the problem had found "no issues with [streetlight] design or construction," and that the absence of "standard and stable voltage (400Y/230V) of city power…seems to be the issue."[7] According to the same ACF notification letter, the MOI headquarters' maintenance contractor, IDS International, agreed with ACF's assessment.

During their weekly maintenance inspection, IDS International recorded power fluctuation readings and regularly discovered "damages…to the building's light bulbs, street light bulbs" and that "10-15 AC [air conditioning] units were not working properly in building 301" because of the problems with Kabul's power.[8]

[7] ACF letter to USACE, "Contract No. W5J9JE-17-C-0002, MOI-ECPs/Parking/Lighting—Concern Over City Power Instability at MOI HQ," July 10, 2018. ACF's letter did not state how many streetlights were not working at that time.

[8] ACF letter to USACE, "Contract No. W5J9JE-17-C-0002…," July 10, 2018.

Because the city's power is the likely cause of the nonfunctional streetlights, ACF said it would not issue warranties on any streetlight bulbs or bulbs on other electrical work under this contract. ACF instead recommended three solutions:

1. The MOI should install electrical equipment that will fix voltage irregularities.
2. The MOI should work with Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat to solve the problem.[9]
3. The MOI should use new electrical power generators.

During our site visits, we found only 5 of the 90 streetlights worked. Therefore, it does not appear that the MOI took any of the corrective actions recommended by ACF to operate and maintain the streetlights. Without the lights, street safety and security is compromised due to the lack of visibility.

Photo 5 - Nonworking Streetlights

Source: SIGAR, February 12, 2020

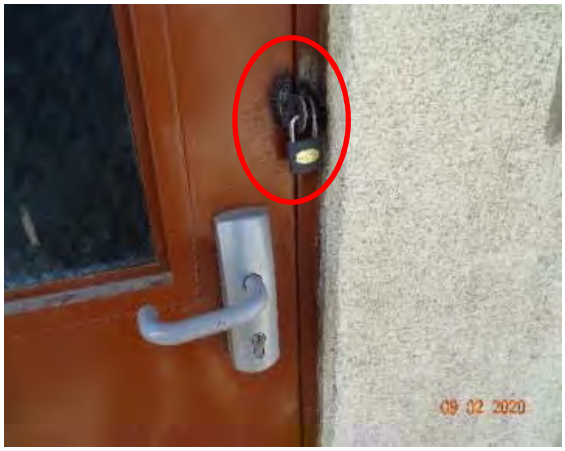
Two ECP Building Exit Doors Did Not Have Panic Bars, and Five Were Padlocked from the Outside

During our February 9, 2020, site visit, we found that two of the ECP building's seven exit doors were missing panic bars, which can be pushed to quickly leave the building in a fire or other emergency (see photo 6). Additionally, the MOI installed padlocks on the outside of five of the doors (see photo 7), which could trap occupants inside during an emergency.[10] The MOI's changes to the approved and installed door hardware on the building exit doors creates serious safety hazards for ministry staff and visitors.

Photo 6 - Missing Panic Bar on Exit Door

Source: SIGAR, February 9, 2020

Photo 7 - Example of Padlocked Exit Door



Source: SIGAR, February 9, 2020

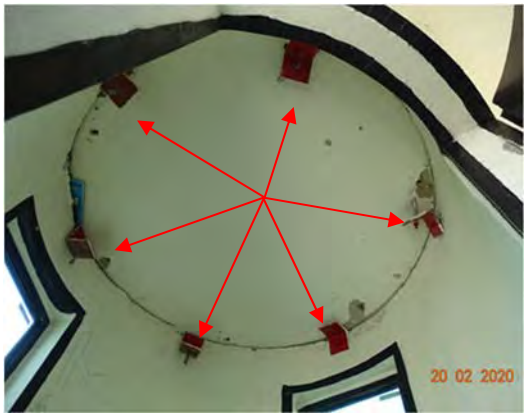
[9] Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat is Afghanistan's national utility company that manages power generation, transmission, and distribution throughout the country.

[10] The five padlocked doors are 103B, 108B, 110, 115A, and 115C.

The Roof of One Guard Shack Was Damaged

During our February 5, 2020, site visit, we found that the roof of a guard shack was separated from its structure. This happened when the MOI moved the shack from its original location outside the parking lot entry checkpoint to its current location inside the lot. All six angle brackets securing the roof to the walls became detached (see photo 8). Although the roof was still in position, the damage could result in a roof that leaks. It also presents a safety hazard if the MOI decides to move the structure again and the unsecured roof becomes completely detached.

Photo 8 - Interior of Damaged Guard Shack



Source: SIGAR, February 5, 2020

The MOI Was Not Using All of the Security Upgrades as Intended

During our site visits in February 2020, we found that the following upgraded security features were not being used as intended: the five drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks, the ECP building, the parking lot, and the Jersey barriers.

Specifically, we found that the MOI was using only one of the six drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks constructed and installed under the contract. The remaining drop-arm checkpoints and guard shacks were not in service. An MOI official said these five checkpoints are used only when the ministry operates under a high-threat security situation.

We also found that the ministry determined that it did not need the ECP building for security screening and modified it to be a public service center and communications office (see photo 9). The MOI built a new bathroom and kitchen facility behind the building, neither of which was part of the original design or ACF's contract. The MOI has spent close to $200,000 (about 15 million afghanis) on the additional renovations.

Additionally, we found that the MOI was using 25 percent of the parking lot to accommodate shipping containers that are being used as barracks for the MOI's Crisis Response Unit (see photo 10). In conjunction with this accommodation, the 52 Jersey barriers were moved by the MOI from their original location to inside the parking lot.

Photo 9 - EPC Building Interior

Source: SIGAR, February 9, 2020

Photo 10 - Crisis Response Unit Barracks in MOI Parking Lot

Source: SIGAR, February 20, 2020

CONCLUSION

ACF generally completed the security upgrades at the MOI complex according to the contract requirements. However, three construction deficiencies exist because ACF did not fully comply with contract requirements. Although the warranties for these deficiencies have now expired, we notified USACE of the deficiencies before the warranty expired for two of them so USACE could require ACF to fix them at no additional cost to the U.S. or Afghan governments. We also found 3 potential safety hazards resulting from a lack of operation and maintenance, including 85 nonworking streetlights and 5 ECP building exit doors that were padlocked from the outside. If not corrected, the deficiencies and lack of maintenance pose safety and security concerns for personnel at the MOI complex.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To protect U.S. taxpayers' investment in the security upgrades at the MOI headquarters complex, we recommend that the CSTC-A Commander:

1. **Notify the MOI about the three construction deficiencies—the concrete barrier at risk of falling over, noncompliant ground cable, and uninstalled card readers—so the MOI is aware of them and can take whatever action it deems appropriate.**
2. **Notify the MOI of the three operation and maintenance problems—nonworking streetlights, missing panic bars and unauthorized exterior padlocks on ECP building exit doors, and damage to a guard shack roof—so the MOI can take whatever action it deems appropriate to correct them.**

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. CSTC-A and USACE provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendices II and III, respectively. CSTC-A stated it acknowledged the recommendations and verbally advised the MOI of the three construction and three operation and maintenance concerns cited in our report. USACE did not concur with either recommendation and requested that we direct the recommendations to CSTC-A. USACE stated that because it was the execution agent under the contract and CSTC-A was the project's sponsor, it was more appropriate for CSTC-A to reach out to the MOI concerning the recommendations. Agreeing with USACE's comment, we revised the recommendations and redirected them to CSTC-A. As a result of CSTC-A's actions, we will close both recommendations as implemented upon issuance of this report.

USACE also requested that we remove our characterization of the leaning concrete barrier as a construction deficiency. USACE states that it did not agree that the concrete barrier was at risk of falling over due to the contractor not adhering to contract requirements. USACE said the field density test results provided to us showed no issue with soil compaction. However, the field density tests USACE provided us were performed in February, June, July, and August 2017. These tests were conducted in various areas of the planned parking lot before it was paved, and were not performed under or near the planned location of the concrete barriers. Furthermore, the test results that USACE provided were dated before soil compaction around any of the concrete barriers took place. Therefore, the tests do not confirm that ACF provided acceptable compaction near the tilting concrete barrier. In sum, although all field density tests we received show good results for the few places that were tested, none were specific to the soil near or directly under the leaning concrete barrier cited in the report.

Additionally, USACE added that we did not provide evidence that ACF did not adhere to contract requirements, only that there was evidence of soil settlement. However, our analysis of the documents and testimonial information provided to us showed that the barrier was leaning and at risk of falling over due to ACF not

properly compacting the soil and rainwater draining from the parking lot through the barrier's drainage hole at ground level. On May 21, 2020, we performed a follow-up site visit to inspect the leaning concrete barrier more closely. MOI staff reported to us that even during construction the rainwater drainage was beginning to weaken the stability of the soil and affect that section of the concrete barrier wall. In addition, we did not find any evidence that the structure was damaged due to a vehicle impact or an intentional move, as USACE stated. Rather, we found that soil instability and erosion near the tilting concrete barrier and adjacent manholes had progressively worsened to the point that nearby barriers were tilting as well. This observation nullifies USACE's suggestion that impacts or movements by MOI staff or equipment caused the issue. As a result, our description of the leaning concrete barrier as a construction deficiency remains in this report

APPENDIX I - SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of SIGAR's inspection of security upgrades at the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) headquarters complex in Kabul. The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether (1) the upgrades were completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) the facilities are being used as intended and maintained. Specifically, we

- reviewed contract documents, design submittals, and other relevant project documentation;
- interviewed MOI officials concerning the project's construction, use, and maintenance; and
- conducted site visits to the headquarters complex on February 5, 9, 10, 12, and 20, 2020, and a follow-up site visit on May 21, 2020.

We did not rely on computer-processed data in conducting this inspection. However, we considered compliance with laws and indicators of fraud, other illegal acts, and abuse, and their potential impacts.

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 security upgrades during site visits in February 2020 and on May 21, 2020.

We developed a standardized engineering evaluation checklist covering items required by the contract. The 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 our Afghan partner engineers to ensure that the inspection's planning and approach 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 our partners;
- referred any potential fraud or illegal acts to SIGAR's Investigations Directorate, as appropriate;
- monitored our partners' progress in meeting milestones and revised contract delivery dates as needed; and
- conducted oversight of our partners 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, Afghanistan, and Arlington, Virginia, from November 2019 through May 2020, in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* January 2012, 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 believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our inspection objectives. We conducted this inspection under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

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HEADQUARTERS RESOLUTE SUPPORT
COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND – AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09320

CSTC-A 28 June 2020

MEMORANDUM THRU

United States Forces – Afghanistan DCDR-S, APO AE 09356
United States Central Command (CCIG), MacDill Air Force Base, FL 33621

FOR Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), 2530 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202-3940

SUBJECT: Response to SIGAR's Draft Inspection Report I-064: "Ministry of Interior Security Upgrades"

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) response to the SIGAR Draft Inspection Report I-064: "Ministry of Interior Security Upgrades."

2. While CSTC-A was not mentioned in the report, CSTC-A appreciates SIGAR's review of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) security upgrades. Even though there were no outstanding punch items remaining when the facility was turned over to CSTC-A, and then to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, CSTC-A acknowledges the recommendations. To ensure MoI notification, CSTC-A has verbally advised the MoI about the three construction and the three operational and maintenance concerns identified in the report.

3. Point of contact is Mr. Matthew A. Norton, matthew.a.norton18.civ@mail.mil, DSN 318-449-4738.

KENNETH W. LETCHER
COL, USA
CSTC-A, Director of Staff

UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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CETAD-CDR

02 JUL 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR Jeffrey C. Brown, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Inspection (Crystal City), SIGAR, 1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 900, Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: Response to Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Draft Report, I-64, Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) Security Upgrades: Project Was Generally Completed According to Contract Requirements, but Construction and Maintenance Problems Exist

1. This is the Transatlantic Division, USACE response to the SIGAR Draft Report, Afghan Ministry of Interior Security Upgrades: Project Was Generally Completed According to Contract Requirements, but Construction and Maintenance Problems Exist. This report contains two recommendations for the Commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

2. SIGAR made the following recommendations to the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

"*To protect U.S. taxpayers' investment in the security upgrades at the MOI headquarters complex, we recommend that the USACE Commanding General and Chief of Engineers:*

a. Notify the MOI about the three construction deficiencies—the concrete barrier at risk of falling over, noncompliant ground cable, and uninstalled card readers—so the MOI is aware of them and can take whatever action it deems appropriate.

b. Notify the MOI of the three operational and maintenance problems—nonworking streetlights, missing panic bars and unauthorized exterior padlocks on ECP building exit doors, and damage to a guard shack roof—so the MOI can take whatever action it deems appropriate to correct them.

USACE is the execution agent for the construction contract and upon completion of the project, turned the completed project over to the sponsor, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A). USACE non-concurs with recommendations 1 and 2 and respectfully requests SIGAR direct the recommendations to the sponsor of the project, CSTC-A.

SUBJECT: Response to Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Draft Report, I-64, Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) Security Upgrades: Project Was Generally Completed According to Contract Requirements, but Construction and Maintenance Problems Exist

3. USACE further requests SIGAR remove its characterization of the leaning concrete barrier as a "construction deficiency." Discussions supporting the request are contained in the attached document.

4. USACE appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to SIGAR's draft report on the MOI Security Upgrades project.

5. My point of contact for this response is Ms. Melissa Blackburn, Chief, Internal Review. She may be reached at Melissa.D.Blackburn@usace.army.mil or 540-424-9090.

COL Stephen H. Bales
Digitally signed by COL Stephen H. Bales
Date: 2020.07.02 16:38:11 -04'00'

Encl

STEPHEN H.BALES
COL, EN
Commanding

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ENCLOSURE

Concrete Barrier Was at Risk of Falling Over

SIGAR classified a concrete barrier as a construction deficiency, stating *"A concrete barrier was at risk of falling over".* SIGAR further states *"Based on our engineering assessment, we determined that the concrete barrier became unstable for two reasons. First, ACF did not properly compact the soil, as required under the contract. Second, the soil around the barriers weakened due to rainwater draining from the parking lot through the concrete barrier's drainage hole at ground level and into the nearby drainage ditch."*

USACE does not agree with SIGAR's assertion that the contractor did not adhere to contract requirements for soil compaction.

USACE provided SIGAR with all Field Density Test (FDT) results in order for SIGAR to make an informed, properly cited decision on the contractual compliance of the soil compaction. The results of the test taken at the time of the construction show no issue with soil compaction.

SIGAR has provided no evidence that ACF did not adhere to the contractual requirements. The *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* states that *"Findings should be supported by sufficient, competent, and relevant evidence."* While this evidence has been requested by USACE, SIGAR has provided no evidence to date indicating the contractual requirements were not met. The t-wall tilting, is evidence of soil settlement, not evidence that contractual requirements were not met. Furthermore, the warranty phase for the parking lot and surrounding t-walls ended in July 2019, nearly seven months prior to SIGAR's site visit. During this time, there are a multitude of events that may have caused the t-wall to shift such as the wall being impacted by a vehicle or intentionally moved, causing the underlying base layers to lose their structural integrity.

Additionally, SIGAR includes the statement, "An MOI official said the ministry notified ACF about the unstable concrete barrier before the project's completion." End-users are provided with thorough warranty claim instructions at turnover and can submit claims throughout the warranty period. MOI specifically signed a turnover memorandum on March 5, 2019 which documents the handover of the Warranty Management Plan. Both the 4 month and 9 month warranty inspections stated there were no issues. There is no record that a Warranty Claim was actually filed in accordance with the Warranty Management Plan provided to the MOI.

APPENDIX IV - ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

Adam Bonfanti, Senior Audit Manager

Erika Ersland, Inspector-in-Charge

Wilhelmina Pierce, General Engineer

Bashir Ahmad Shakeeb, Management Analyst

Shahanshah Shirzay, Civil Engineer

This inspection was conducted
under project code SIGAR-I-064.

SIGAR's Mission

The mission of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) is to enhance oversight of programs for the reconstruction of Afghanistan by conducting independent and objective audits, inspections, and investigations on the use of taxpayer dollars and related funds. SIGAR works to provide accurate and balanced information, evaluations, analysis, and recommendations to help the U.S. Congress, U.S. agencies, and other decision-makers to make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions to:

- improve effectiveness of the overall reconstruction strategy and its component programs;
- improve management and accountability over funds administered by U.S. and Afghan agencies and their contractors;
- improve contracting and contract management processes;
- prevent fraud, waste, and abuse; and
- advance U.S. interests in reconstructing Afghanistan.

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