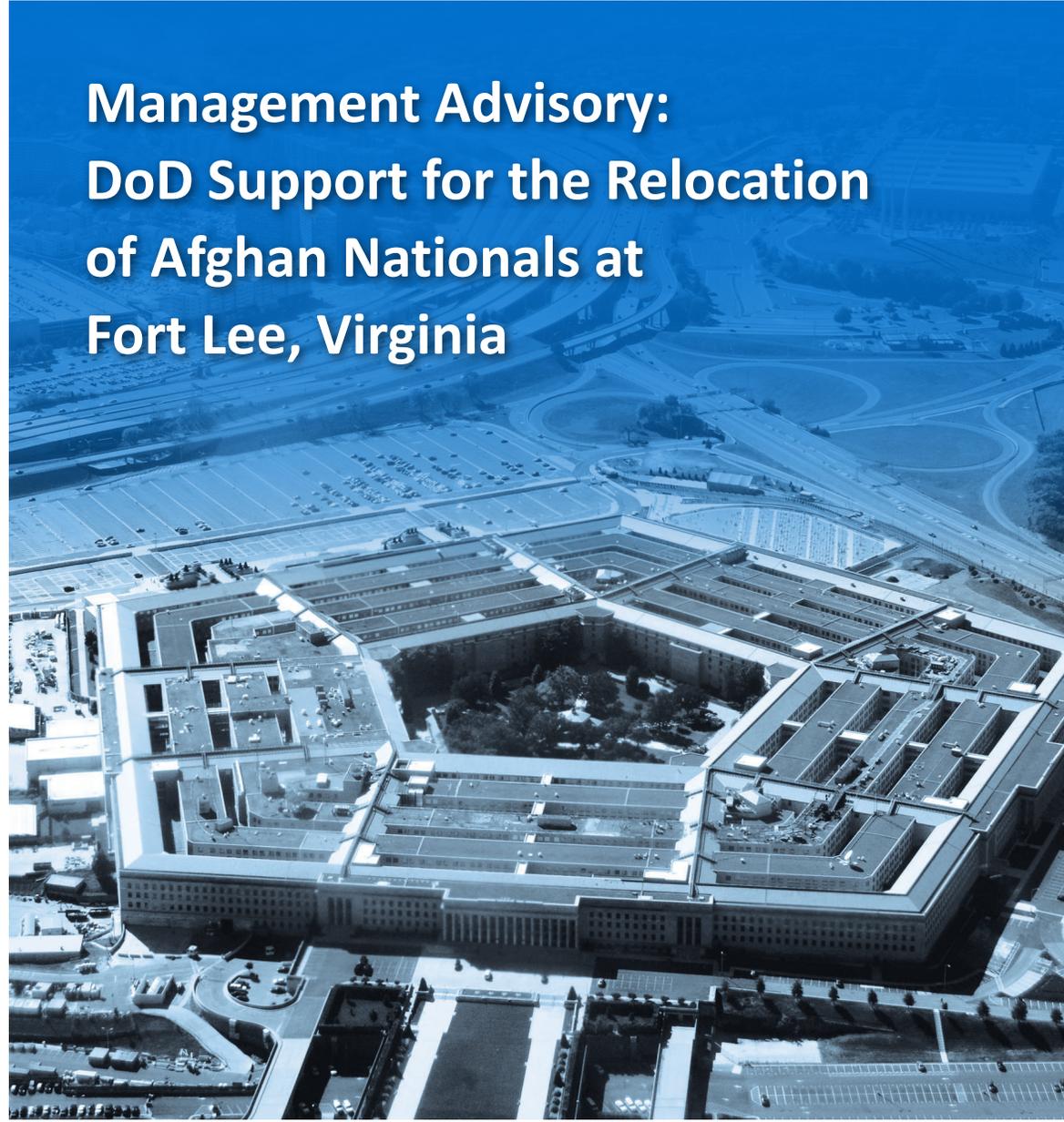


INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

JANUARY 5, 2022



Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals at Fort Lee, Virginia

INTEGRITY ★ INDEPENDENCE ★ EXCELLENCE





**INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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January 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY NORTH
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals at Fort Lee, Virginia (Report No. DODIG-2022-051)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide officials responsible for receiving, housing, supporting, and preparing Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location with the results from our site visit to Task Force (TF) Eagle at Fort Lee, Virginia. The team visited TF Eagle from September 16 through 21, 2021. We conducted the work on this project with integrity, objectivity, and independence, as required by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General.

Our review of TF Eagle operations at Fort Lee was conducted as part of the "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals (Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000)."¹ The objective of this audit is to determine whether the DoD has adequately planned and provided support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The audit team visited Fort Lee to review housing and other facilities, security, medical care, and costs associated with the effort.

Operation Allies Refuge

On July 14, 2021, the President announced Operation Allies Refuge, with the Department of State (DOS) as the lead Federal agency, to support the relocation of Afghan evacuees who previously supported the U.S. Government and were in the process of completing their Special Immigrant Visa applications.² Applicants' immediate family members were also included in the relocation effort. During Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation

¹ DoD OIG Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000, "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals," announced August 23, 2021.

² In 2014, Congress amended the Special Immigrant Visa program to provide U.S. visas for translators and interpreters who performed "sensitive and trusted activities" for the U.S. Government in Afghanistan.

Freedom's Sentinel, the U.S. Government employed Afghans in supporting roles to assist in these operations. Due to that employment, some Afghans, their families, and close friends faced ongoing, serious threats. According to a statement by the President on August 30, 2021, the DoD executed the largest airlift in U.S. history, evacuating over 120,000 people from Afghanistan in just 17 days. The DOS activated the Afghanistan Coordination Task Force and requested and received DoD-provided support in the form of temporary housing, sustainment, and other support at suitable DoD facilities both within and outside the continental United States.³

Operation Allies Welcome

On August 29, 2021, the President announced that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would serve as the lead Federal agency for Operation Allies Welcome, coordinating ongoing efforts across the U.S. Government to resettle vulnerable Afghans in the United States, including those who worked for the United States and Coalition forces since 2001.⁴ The DHS processes, screens, and vets Afghans in coordination with the DoD, the DOS, and other Federal agencies. The DOS and the Department of Health and Human Services are responsible for the final resettlement and integration efforts.

DoD Roles and Responsibilities Supporting Operation Allies Welcome

On August 15, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed the U.S. Northern Command to provide temporary housing, sustainment, and support inside the United States for Afghan evacuees, their families, and other individuals at risk from the Taliban. As the DoD's lead combatant command for Operation Allies Welcome, the U.S. Northern Command provides housing and security at U.S. military installations. As of September 2021, there were eight U.S.-based military installations, including Fort Lee, supporting the relocation of Afghan evacuees under Operation Allies Welcome.⁵

Fort Lee Operations and Task Force Eagle

Fort Lee is home to the Army's ordnance, quartermaster, and transportation schools, and the Army Logistics University. On July 15, 2021, the U.S. Northern Command notified Fort Lee officials that the installation was selected as the first site in the United States to house Afghan nationals evacuated from Afghanistan as part of Operations Allies Refuge and Welcome.

³ The Afghanistan Coordination Task Force is led by the DOS and includes experts from various U.S. Government agencies, including the DoD, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

⁴ Operation Allies Refuge was the operation to airlift at-risk Afghan evacuees, who supported the DoD, out of Afghanistan. Operation Allies Welcome is an ongoing effort across the U.S. Government to support these Afghan evacuees as they resettle in the United States.

⁵ The eight installations are Fort Pickett, Virginia; Fort Lee, Virginia; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

Fort Lee is located 153 miles from Dulles International Airport, outside of Washington, D.C. Dulles and Philadelphia International Airports were the primary facilities in the United States receiving inbound Afghan evacuees from overseas locations.

The U.S. Northern Command formed TF Eagle to support Operation Allies Welcome at Fort Lee with the mission to safely receive, house, support, and prepare Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location. TF Eagle was composed of DoD commands, the DOS, the DHS, and non-governmental organizations providing support to the Afghan evacuees.

In July 2021, the DOS Comptroller and the Commanding General for TF Eagle signed a memorandum of understanding for support the DOS and the DoD agreed to provide for Operation Allies Welcome at Fort Lee. The memorandum outlined the general responsibilities of the DOS and TF Eagle but did not include any cost-sharing agreements.⁶ The memorandum stated the DOS would provide daily updates to Afghan evacuees on their case processing, and TF Eagle would provide temporary lodging, sustainment, and support for Afghan evacuees. Specifically, the memorandum stated that TF Eagle support included:

- climate-controlled accommodations with bedding,
- culturally appropriate food,
- water,
- face masks and toiletries,
- space for religious services and recreational activities, and
- information technology and internet access.

In addition, the memorandum stated that TF Eagle would provide medical services and examinations required to complete the immigration process, as well as short-term and emergent medical care (acute care) by DoD medical clinicians or contracted medical support.

According to the Commanding General for TF Eagle, the first group of 250 Afghan evacuees arrived at Fort Lee on July 30, 2021. In August 2021, the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated and the rate of evacuations increased. TF Eagle had to increase capacity accordingly from the originally planned 500 Afghan evacuees to 1,750 Afghan evacuees. As of September 12, 2021, TF Eagle had received a cumulative total of 2,581 Afghan evacuees and out-processed 829 to resettlement locations. TF Eagle officials stated that they initially anticipated Afghan evacuees would remain at Fort Lee for approximately 5 to 7 days while completing their final medical screenings and administrative tasks, such as filling out immigration paperwork, before

⁶ "Memorandum of Understanding Between Installation Commander, Fort Lee, Virginia, and Department of State (DOS) for Operations Allies Refuge (OAR)," signed July 30, 2021.

out-processing. However, according to TF Eagle officials, the DOS was taking longer than 7 days to finalize the immigration process of individual Afghan evacuees, causing Afghan evacuees to stay at Fort Lee longer than anticipated.

Afghan Evacuee In-Processing at Fort Lee

There were no Afghan evacuees in-processed during the audit team’s site visit; however, TF Eagle officials walked the audit team through the process and through a tour of the facilities. Upon arrival at Fort Lee, Afghan evacuees were in-processed in an air-conditioned administration tent outside the main entrance to the privately owned hotel on Fort Lee. DOS personnel entered biographical and demographic information for each arriving Afghan evacuee into the DOS-managed system called Hummingbird.⁷ The DOS recorded other information in Hummingbird including the person’s primary language, whether they had a personal smart phone, whether the person had lost any luggage and, if so, whether the person had initiated a claim in order to retrieve it. Once in the system, TF Eagle personnel gave the newly arriving Afghan evacuee a lanyard with their name on it and assigned the Afghan evacuee to a cohort of 25 people. Family members were assigned to the same cohort, and as family groups changed—such as family members who arrived on later flights—TF Eagle officials updated the cohorts as necessary.

Task Force Eagle Successes and Challenges

From September 16 through 21, 2021, the audit team conducted a site visit to Fort Lee to observe the facility conditions and treatment of Afghan evacuees. We identified several aspects of TF Eagle operations that fulfilled its responsibilities in the memorandum of understanding with the DOS. Specifically, we observed:

- housing and sustainment support, including hotel rooms, food, and water;
- medical care including access to vaccines, prevention of communicable diseases (such as coronavirus disease–2019 [COVID-19]), and contracted obstetric-gynecological and pediatric care; and
- physical security and accountability practices.

The audit team also identified one fire safety issue in the privately owned hotel used for housing Afghan evacuees.

⁷ The Hummingbird database is a DOS-owned database created to support Operation Allies Welcome. The system captures Afghan evacuees’ identification data such as name, date of birth, and passport number; medical data such as lab results, vaccinations, and medical exams; and biometric data such as fingerprints and photos for immigrants seeking resettlement.

Housing and Sustainment Support

TF Eagle, through the use of a privately owned, contractor-operated hotel and a base operations support services contract, provided housing and dining facilities for Afghan evacuees at Fort Lee.⁸ In the area immediately surrounding the hotel, TF Eagle erected air-conditioned tents to provide other sustainment services, including organizing donated items (clothing and hygiene items), and hosting Morale, Welfare, and Recreation activities.

Use of a Privately Owned Hotel for Housing

TF Eagle used an existing hotel on Fort Lee to provide Afghan evacuees with solid structure housing. The U.S. Army constructed the 7-story hotel in December 2012. The audit team observed that floors 4 through 7 of the hotel were reserved for housing Afghan evacuees. These floors totaled 512 standard rooms and 64 family suites. According to the Hospitality Operations Manager, four people were housed in each standard room and six in each family suite. See Figure 1 for a picture of the hotel used to house Afghan evacuees at Fort Lee and some of the tents built around the hotel for services such as dining and recreation.



Figure 1. Holiday Inn Express at Fort Lee

Source: TF Eagle and the U.S. Northern Command.

Note: The picture on the left was taken before the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The picture on the right shows TF Eagle personnel setting up tents outside the hotel in July 2021.

Each room included one queen-sized bed; however, TF Eagle provided 600 military cots and additional sheets, pillows, and blankets. Each room and suite had its own bathroom with a toilet and a shower. As a result, there was one toilet and one shower for every four to six Afghan evacuees housed on Fort Lee. According to the Hospitality Operations Manager, all rooms and en-suite bathrooms were cleaned and restocked weekly; for example, soap and shampoo dispensers available inside showers were replenished. Additionally, Afghan evacuees could request another cleaning or additional towels or bedding from

⁸ The Logistics Civil Augmentation Program contract is administered by the U.S. Army Sustainment Command to provide base operations support services throughout the world such as food, shelter, water, laundry, medical and emergency, construction, and maintenance.

the hotel front desk when needed. Due to the nature of hotel processes, this reduced the burden of distributing hygiene items individually through a central processing point and reduced the waste created by reliance on single-use packages. Laundry machines and laundry detergent were also available for Afghan evacuees to use, free of charge, on each floor of the hotel. See Figure 2 for pictures of a hotel room and bathroom at Fort Lee.



Figure 2. Example of a Hotel Room Inside the Holiday Inn Express at Fort Lee
Source: The DoD OIG.

Housing and Safety Issue Identified and Resolved

TF Eagle personnel provided Afghan evacuees cots to supplement the one bed in each room. During a walkthrough, DoD OIG engineers found that, in some instances, cots had been moved into the hallways to make more space in the rooms. Figure 3 is a photograph taken during the DoD OIG walkthrough showing cots stored in a hallway. Cots or other supplies blocking the hallway created a tripping hazard that could impede an evacuation.



Figure 3. Example of Cots in the Hallways in the Hotel
Source: The DoD OIG.

After the walkthrough, the audit team notified TF Eagle personnel of this issue. TF Eagle officials stated that they would immediately remove the cots from the hallways. The next day, the audit team revisited the hotel and observed no cots blocking the hallways.

DoD OIG engineers also found that the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation tent outside the hotel blocked the reinforced sidewalk that would be used by a ladder truck to evacuate the upper floors in the event of a fire. We notified TF Eagle officials, and they stated they would work internally and with hotel personnel to find a solution. TF Eagle operations have since ended and the tent has been removed.

Food and Water

TF Eagle used the base operations support services contract to provide culturally appropriate food for Afghan evacuees. Specifically, Afghan evacuees received three hot meals per day in an air-conditioned dining facility tent. Each meal included a halal protein.⁹ In addition, TF Eagle provided access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to snacks at a separate tent and to bottled water stationed throughout the housing area.

Donations

TF Eagle erected a tent to maintain clothing, stuffed animals, and other toys donated by the local community. Afghan evacuees were allowed into the donation tent at any time to select clothing and toys for their families. Other convenience items, such as cigarettes, potato chips, and energy drinks, were available for purchase in the Mobile Exchange trailers parked within the housing perimeter.

Recreation Activities

TF Eagle used tents to provide Afghan evacuees with dedicated areas for cultural and leisure activities. For example, TF Eagle officials stated that the air-conditioned Morale, Welfare, and Recreation tent was popular during the warmer parts of the afternoon, and an air-conditioned tent segregated by gender and designated for religious observance was available. The audit team also observed outdoor and indoor space for children to play and do arts and crafts. Free wireless internet was available in the housing area for the approximately 60 percent of Afghan evacuees who had personal smartphones. Access to the free wireless internet allowed Afghan evacuees to talk and videoconference with family and friends in Afghanistan and around the world.

Medical Care

TF Eagle provided medical care to Afghan evacuees at Fort Lee through medical in-processing and medical treatment. An Air Force Expeditionary Medical Support System (Air Force Medical) team conducted Afghan evacuee medical in-processing. Air Force Medical personnel performed physicals, completed lab draws, and administered vaccines. All medical treatment services needed by Afghan evacuees at Fort Lee were funded under the base operations support services contract. The contractors provided acute care such as issuing medication, administering x-rays, supplying

⁹ Halal is Arabic for “permissible” and indicates the food was prepared in accordance with Islamic law.

obstetric-gynecological care, and providing ambulance services. The DHS issued guidance stating that Afghan evacuees could not leave Fort Lee until they had completed all medical screenings and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-required vaccinations.¹⁰

Access to All Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Required Vaccines

TF Eagle medical officials stated that they provided the 13 vaccines required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to Afghan evacuees. The DHS issued a memorandum establishing medical requirements for Afghan evacuees in line with Centers for Disease Control guidance.¹¹ Among the 13 vaccines, Afghan evacuees received COVID-19, polio, and measles vaccines, as well as a tuberculosis screening. As of September 12, 2021, TF Eagle had completed medical processing, including testing, vaccinating, examining, and documenting, for 2,487 Afghan evacuees, or 96 percent of all Afghan evacuees who had arrived at Fort Lee. As of October 21, 2021, the following percentages of Afghan evacuees had received the four vaccines that the U.S. Northern Command tracks:

- Measles - 100 percent
- Varicella - 100 percent
- COVID-19 - 66 percent
- Polio - 100 percent

Contracted Medical Care

TF Eagle established a dedicated contracted medical treatment area composed of eight portable tents. The audit team toured the contracted medical treatment area and confirmed that there were eight portable tents for different medical services, sleeping and holding areas, bathrooms, showers, and ambulances for medical emergencies. See Figure 4 for an example of the inside of one of the contracted medical tents.



Figure 4. Pictures of Medical Tents

Source: The DoD OIG.

Note: Left is a mobile X-ray machine in a tent; right is a holding tent with beds.

¹⁰ DHS, "Afghan Parolee Information."

¹¹ DHS Memorandum, "Medical Requirements for Operation Allies Welcome," September 5, 2021.

Air Force Medical personnel stated that the tents were cleaned twice per day and reported there were two medical interpreters: one male and one female. The TF Surgeon stated that the contracted medical staff had treated many different Afghan evacuees, including diabetic patients, patients with amputated limbs, and a stage four cancer patient.

Prevention of Communicable Disease Spread

Only about 1 percent of the Afghan evacuees at Fort Lee had a communicable disease. Specifically, as of September 27, 2021, TF Eagle reported 2 active cases of measles and 36 active cases of COVID-19 in the Afghan evacuee population. A DHS official stated during a September 2021 briefing that the DoD instituted a stop movement order so no Afghan evacuees were allowed to depart Fort Lee, or other installations housing Afghan evacuees, until the stop movement order was lifted.¹² With respect to COVID-19, TF Eagle had no cases that resulted in hospitalizations of Afghan evacuees. The Air Force Medical personnel established effective COVID-19 prevention and testing procedures. According to a medical administrator, if one person from a family or small group tested positive, the individual was placed in isolation for 10 days and the rest of the group was quarantined for 7 days. According to a medical administrator, the Air Force Medical team also conducted COVID-19 tests of all Afghan evacuees on a weekly basis.

Additionally, Air Force Medical personnel stated that all Afghan evacuees, DoD personnel, non-governmental organization personnel, and other Federal employees were required to wear masks inside and outside. During the audit team's walkthrough of the housing area and the medical processing area, nearly everyone was wearing masks, and those who were not were Afghan evacuees outside or children. We also observed TF Eagle personnel asking unmasked Afghan evacuees to wear masks.

Access to Specialized Care

The contracted medical staff provided obstetric-gynecological and pediatric care. Expectant mothers were taken to a local hospital to give birth, then the contracted medical staff provided postpartum care. According to the TF Surgeon, at TF Eagle, 60 mothers had given birth and another 30 women were pregnant. Additionally, the TF Surgeon stated that TF Eagle had good relationships with the local hospitals and had procedures in place for helping Afghan evacuees understand medical forms.

Physical Security and Accountability

TF Eagle established physical security and accountability procedures in order to keep Afghan evacuees safe. Physical security and accountability were key to ensuring Afghan evacuees did not leave the dedicated housing area on Fort Lee to access other parts of the installation.

¹² The DoD issued a stop movement order while the Air Force Medical team administered measles vaccinations to the Afghan evacuee population. After receiving the vaccine, Afghan evacuees were required to quarantine for 21 days. The DoD stop order movement lasted from September 10, 2021, through the week of October 4, 2021.

Physical Security

TF Eagle established physical security around the dedicated Afghan evacuee housing area. Specifically, Fort Lee's Directorate of Emergency Services adopted an approach centered on layers of security, and included a traffic control plan, a barrier plan, and a patrol distribution plan. Planning efforts were informed by two factors: minimizing the impact of TF Eagle activities on the normal operation of the installation and ensuring that the housing area did not look and feel like a detention center. To avoid this look and feel, areas accessible to Afghan evacuees were enclosed using snow fencing rather than tall, metal fencing.

Ensuring security within the housing area was a team effort requiring coordination among personnel from TF Eagle units temporarily assigned to Fort Lee, Directorate of Emergency Services personnel permanently stationed at Fort Lee, and military police. Access points to the housing area were monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by military police and limited to one controlled entry point for pedestrians and one for vehicles. The housing area security officer and commander stated that outdoor areas of the housing area were patrolled at all times by military police and only personnel with TF Eagle-issued badges were allowed unescorted access.

Requests to Leave Fort Lee Before Processing Was Complete

According to TF Eagle officials, Afghan evacuees housed at Fort Lee, or any other U.S. Military installation, had the right to leave the installation and embark on a resettlement process on their own, even though this might result in the loss of some benefits, including relocation assistance from refugee resettlement agencies. TF Eagle established a working group to develop an out-processing checklist for voluntary departures, including a "cooling off" period and an opportunity for DOS and DHS personnel to provide counsel on benefits that might be lost. Additionally, any Afghan evacuees who chose to leave the installation received documentation certifying their legal entry into the United States, as well as a copy of their vaccination records. As of September 20, 2021, only one Afghan evacuee at Fort Lee had opted to leave Fort Lee without completing the resettlement process.

Accountability of Afghan Evacuees

According to TF Eagle in-processing officials, there were zero incidents of Afghan evacuees unaccounted for as of September 17, 2021. Each Afghan evacuee was given a badge worn on a lanyard to identify them as an Afghan evacuee. Until September 17, 2021, TF Eagle conducted what the Army calls a 100-percent Personnel Asset Inventory, in which all Afghan evacuees (including children) reported to the administration tent located outside the hotel daily to physically check in. After September 17, 2021, TF Eagle reduced this to a daily check-in only for heads of household and a check-in for all other Afghan evacuees every seven days, coinciding with their required COVID-19 testing. TF Eagle used an Excel spreadsheet to document and track accountability of the Afghan evacuees.

Additionally, TF Eagle relied on a cohort system intended to reduce the ratio of Afghans to individual Soldiers assigned to TF Eagle and increase the frequency of face-to-face contacts with Afghan evacuees, in the interest of better maintaining accountability. The population of Afghan evacuees was divided into cohorts of 25. According to an officer overseeing in-processing and assisting with accountability in the housing area, families, whenever possible, were grouped within the same cohort. Each cohort was led by a liaison officer from TF Eagle. The liaison officer was an Army non-commissioned officer who was responsible for helping to communicate rules, maintain accountability, and escort Afghan evacuees from the housing area to the medical area for medical processing or care. According to liaison officers who spoke with the audit team, TF Eagle personnel made in-person contact with every individual in their cohorts three times a day, and documented the contacts in an Excel spreadsheet. According to a TF Eagle official, through this continued contact, liaison officers developed positive and trusting relationships with the members of their cohort. The TF Eagle official further stated that this contributed to morale as well as increased accountability.

Financial Costs of Task Force Eagle Operations

In an August 19, 2021 memorandum, the DoD Deputy Comptroller established cost reporting requirements and procedures for DoD Components supporting the relocation effort.¹³ The Deputy Comptroller required DoD Components to submit weekly flash reports of all direct and reimbursable costs associated with the relocation of Afghan evacuees and directed the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to provide additional reporting instructions to DoD Components. The Deputy Comptroller also stated that the DoD Financial Management Regulation provided instruction on reporting the cost of contingency operations.¹⁴

According to TF Eagle officials, as of September 18, 2021, TF Eagle operations had cost the Army about \$48 million. The two largest expenses were the hotel cost of \$4 million and the base operations and support services contract cost of \$28 million. As of the same date, the DoD had provided TF Eagle with \$55,000 in Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid funding to cover part of the \$48 million spent. On October 19, 2021, TF Eagle personnel estimated the task force would need an additional \$71 million to continue operations until November 24, 2021, for a total operational cost of \$119 million.

Another cost associated with TF Eagle operations was the cost incurred by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to house students off base while they attended training classes at Fort Lee. The students normally stayed at the private hotel on base, but because that was being used to house Afghan evacuees, the students stayed at hotels off base. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command estimated that it would spend an extra \$18 million to house students off base through December 2021.

¹³ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, "DoD Support to the Department of State for Afghan Special Immigration Visa (SIV) Applicants," August 19, 2021.

¹⁴ DoD Regulation 7000.14-R, "DoD Financial Management Regulation," volume 12, chapter 23.

We are providing this management advisory memorandum for information and use. This memorandum identifies the challenges and successes observed during our site visit to TF Eagle located at Fort Lee, Virginia. On November 17, 2021, a DHS official stated that the final Afghan evacuees at TF Eagle were processed and resettled. A TF Eagle official stated that task force officials had started returning to their respective commands and the base operations support contract personnel had started deconstructing the tents around the hotel.

The interagency partners, as well as the commands directly and indirectly responsible for the relocation of Afghan evacuees, should read this memorandum to be aware of the challenges and opportunities for improvement regarding the in-processing, sustainment and physical security support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The DoD OIG will issue additional management advisories for each site visited to the appropriate organizations responsible for the Afghan relocation effort for their review and use.

We considered management's comments on a discussion draft copy of this management advisory when preparing this final memorandum. A written response is not required. If you have any questions, please contact me at [REDACTED]



Richard B. Vasquez
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