OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

U.S. Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan Is Progressing but Some Key Issues Merit Further Examination as Implementation Continues

October 26, 2010

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The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Karl W. Eikenberry
U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture

Dr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development

Earl Gast
USAID Mission Director to Afghanistan

This report presents the results of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR) review of the implementation of the civilian uplift in support of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. It includes two recommendations to examine key issues that have been raised over the initial stages of the uplift and to develop a mechanism for collecting, analyzing, and implementing best practices and lessons learned during the uplift.

A summary of this report is on page ii. This performance audit was conducted by SIGAR under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181 and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. When preparing the final report, we considered comments from the U.S. Embassy Kabul, which generally concurred with the report's recommendations and indicated that U.S. agencies were taking actions to implement them. These comments are reproduced in appendix III.

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SIGAR

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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U.S. Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan Is Progressing but Some Key Issues Merit Further Examination as Implementation Continues

What SIGAR Reviewed

Announced in March 2009, the U.S. civilian uplift is a key element of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Its purpose is to increase the amount of civilian resources, including personnel, available to implement efforts to enhance Afghan governance capacity, improve rule of law, and initiate sustainable economic growth. The strategy also focuses on advancing these efforts at the sub-national, or field, level. Given the large influx of U.S. government civilian personnel into Afghanistan, it is essential for agencies to ensure that these civilians have the support needed to achieve U.S. strategic goals in Kabul and at the field level. This report identifies (1) the types and number of personnel provided to implement the civilian uplift and the extent to which the life and operational support needs of these personnel have been met, and (2) key areas of concern raised during the initial stages of the uplift. SIGAR conducted this performance audit in Kabul and selected field sites in Afghanistan from April to September 2010 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

What SIGAR Found

U.S. agencies have deployed nearly 67 percent of the personnel identified as part of the civilian uplift, and to date, have largely met life and operational support needs in the field. Sixteen agencies, representing 8 departments, are providing personnel to fill 626 new positions identified as part of the civilian uplift. The uplift will be implemented over two phases and contributes to an increase from 320 personnel in January 2009 to approximately 1500 personnel by January 2012, according to current estimates. The first phase of the uplift ended in December 2009; the current phase began in January 2010 and will be completed in December 2011. Of the new positions, 294 will be located in Kabul, with the remaining positions distributed across locations throughout the country, such as provincial reconstruction teams and district support teams. As of September 9, 2010, a reported 418 personnel have deployed to Afghanistan, including 227 personnel in the field. Based on SIGAR's review of Embassy documents and discussions with officials in Kabul and the field, civilian life and operational support needs have generally been met across the field locations. However, Afghanistan's operating environment presents challenges to providing this support, including the lack of adequate security, which affects civilians' mobility.

Several key areas merit further examination as the U.S. Embassy implements the second phase of the civilian uplift. During our review, we identified several topics of concern that field staff at all levels raised over the course of the uplift, including the effectiveness of training; level of agency guidance on working in the field; and the application of models for civilian-military integration. In late July 2010, the Embassy in conjunction with State department headquarters initiated an interagency review of the uplift; however, plans currently do not include a comprehensive examination of these areas. By including a review of current training and the guidance necessary for working in the field, agencies can better prepare civilian personnel for their assignments and provide them with the guidance they need to carry out their duties. In addition, the application of standardized models for civilian-military integration is necessary to move personnel in the field from a reliance on ad hoc arrangements and individual personalities. Further, the Embassy lacks a formal mechanism for collecting and implementing best practices and lessons learned at the field level. A mechanism to monitor and evaluate the results of various efforts and identify corrective actions would enable the Embassy to make changes that could increase the effectiveness of civilian personnel working in the field.

What SIGAR Recommends

To ensure that the interagency review of the civilian uplift is comprehensive, SIGAR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan include the following items as part of the interagency review: training, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration. In addition, to formally monitor civilians' effectiveness in the field, identify shortfalls, and take corrective actions, SIGAR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan develop a mechanism for collecting, analyzing and applying lessons learned and best practices, to include the design and implementation of a series of comprehensive field surveys. In commenting on a draft of this report, the U.S. Embassy Kabul generally concurred with SIGAR's recommendations and outlined actions taken to implement them.

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ACRONYMS

CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COM	Chief of Mission
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DST	District Support Team
IPA	Office of Interagency Provincial Affairs
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RC	Regional Command
State	Department of State
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFOR-A	U.S. Forces-Afghanistan

U.S. Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan Is Progressing but Some Key Issues Merit Further Examination as Implementation Continues

On March 27, 2009, the President of the United States announced a comprehensive new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan with the core objective of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qaeda and its safe havens. In addition to calling for an increase in military personnel, the new strategy announced the civilian uplift, an increase in civilian-led efforts to build Afghan governance capacity, improve the rule of law, and initiate sustainable economic growth, primarily through agricultural development. The strategy also focuses on advancing these efforts at the sub-national, or field, level. Given the large influx of U.S. government civilian personnel into Afghanistan and the importance of achieving U.S. strategic reconstruction goals, agencies must ensure that these civilians have the support needed to achieve the agencies' strategic goals, particularly in the field.

This report identifies (1) the types and number of personnel provided to implement the civilian uplift and the extent to which the life and operational support[1] needs of these personnel have been met, and (2) key areas of concern raised during the initial stages of the uplift. We limited the scope of our audit to civilian personnel [2] deploying under chief of mission (COM) authority.[3] In addition, given the strategic focus on expanding governance and development efforts at the sub-national level and the substantial increase in civilians expected to deploy to the field, we focused primarily on Department of State (State), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Agriculture (USDA) personnel assigned to regional platforms, brigade task forces, provincial reconstruction teams (PRT), and district support teams (DST) throughout Afghanistan.[4]

To accomplish these objectives, we reviewed U.S. policies and key strategies for Afghanistan and various agency documents including State and U.S. Embassy Kabul cables, staffing requests, and agreements with military and coalition partners. We analyzed Embassy Kabul Management Office data, as recent as September 9, 2010, and Office of Interagency Provincial Affairs (IPA) data, as of July 12, 2010 on current and projected numbers of positions created within U.S. Mission Afghanistan and personnel deployed to Afghanistan as part of the uplift. In addition, we reviewed key practices for interagency collaboration

[1] For the purposes of this report, life support refers to the items needed to sustain personnel such as lodging, food, water, sanitation, basic utilities, and medical services. Operational support refers to items required for personnel to carry out their duties, including office space and supplies, communications equipment, site security, and mobility.

[2] We did not include contractor personnel in our review.

[3] The chief of mission, also referred to as the U.S. Ambassador to a certain country or other specified entity, has full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all U.S. government executive branch employees in that country, except for Voice of America correspondents on official assignment and employees under the command of a U.S. area military commander. See 22 U.S.C. § 3927.

[4] For the purposes of this audit, the field, or sub-national level, refers to the regional platform, brigade task force, PRT, and DST levels.

and strategic workforce planning. During June and July 2010, we conducted site visits to 12 field locations in Regional Commands (RC) East and South to interview U.S. COM civilian, military, and coalition personnel. These included the two regional platforms, two brigade task forces, four PRTs, and four DSTs. We interviewed officials in Embassy Management, IPA, State, USAID, USDA, and the Departments of Justice and the Treasury at the Embassy. In August and September 2010, we provided briefings on our preliminary findings to the Assistant Chief of Mission at the Embassy and the IPA Coordinator, and obtained information on current efforts and State's planned internal review of the civilian uplift. We conducted our work at various locations in Afghanistan from April to September 2010 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. A discussion of our scope and methodology is in appendix I.

BACKGROUND

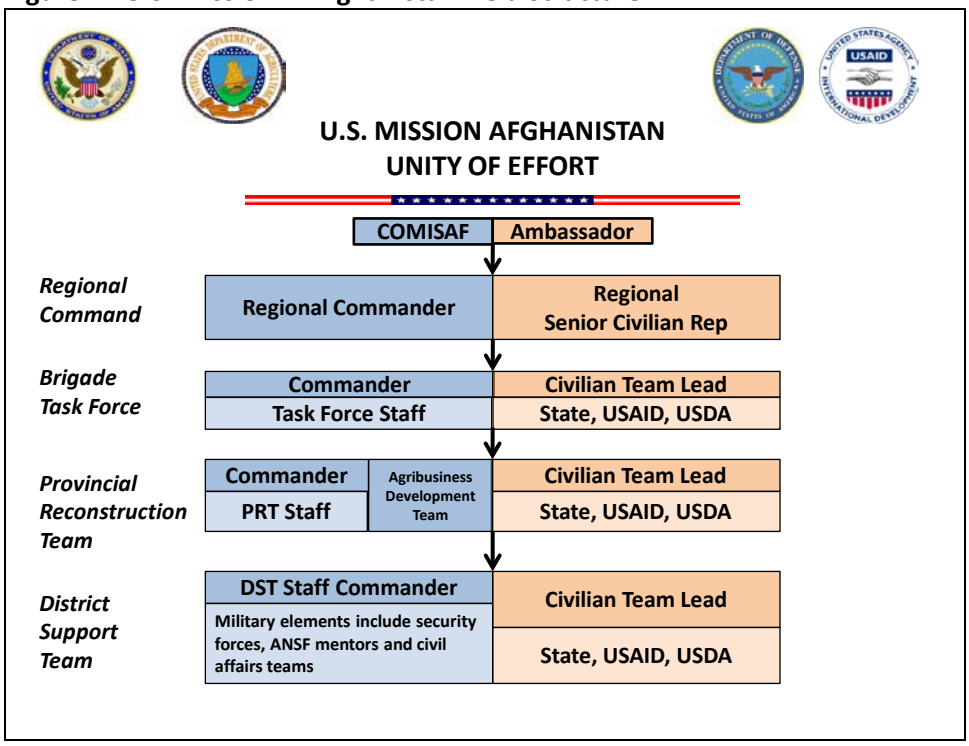
In March 2009, the President of the United States outlined a new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan, which was accompanied by a new policy for Afghanistan.[5] In support of this strategy, U.S. Embassy Kabul and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) released the *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan* in August 2009, and the Secretary of State signed the *Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy* in February 2010. With the core goal of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, these documents delineate efforts to improve security, build Afghan governance capacity, enhance rule of law, and initiate sustainable development as part of the overall reconstruction of Afghanistan. The strategies dictate the need to provide additional support at the sub-national level, with a focus on the more unstable eastern and southern regions of the country. To complement the increased military presence, the strategies call for a substantial increase in the number of civilian personnel and associated resources for civilian-led assistance efforts.

[5] The U.S. strategy for Afghanistan refers to the strategy announced in March 27, 2009 and December 1, 2009 speeches delivered by President Obama.

U.S. Mission Afghanistan Field Structure

The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan is a joint civilian and military effort. Figure 1 shows the structure of this effort under both the COM and Command ISAF authority.

Figure 1: U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Field Structure



Source: U.S. Embassy, 10/19/10.

At the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, IPA, which falls under the purview of the Office of the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs,[6] is the main Embassy section in charge of overseeing COM civilian personnel programmatic efforts at the regional platforms, brigade task forces, PRTs, and DSTs in the field. IPA provides strategy and policy guidance on sub-national governance, stabilization issues, Afghan capacity-building programs, and civilian-military integration. IPA also manages field staffing requests and assignments. The Embassy Management Office is responsible for providing logistical support for all COM civilians deployed to the field. For example, the Management Office oversees civilian life and operational support.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, oversees coalition military operations in Afghanistan, from Kabul to the district level. Outside of Kabul, the primary elements of the military field structure are five regional commands (RC), which are responsible for commanding military forces in their respective regions. These are RC-East, RC-South, RC-North, RC-Southwest, and RC-West.[7] Because U.S. COM civilians in the field are collocated with military personnel, U.S. Embassy Kabul established five civilian-led regional platforms parallel to the five RCs to

[6] The Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs is responsible for ensuring that all interagency economic and development assistance programs are fully integrated and working to meet the U.S. and Afghan governments' goals for Afghanistan.

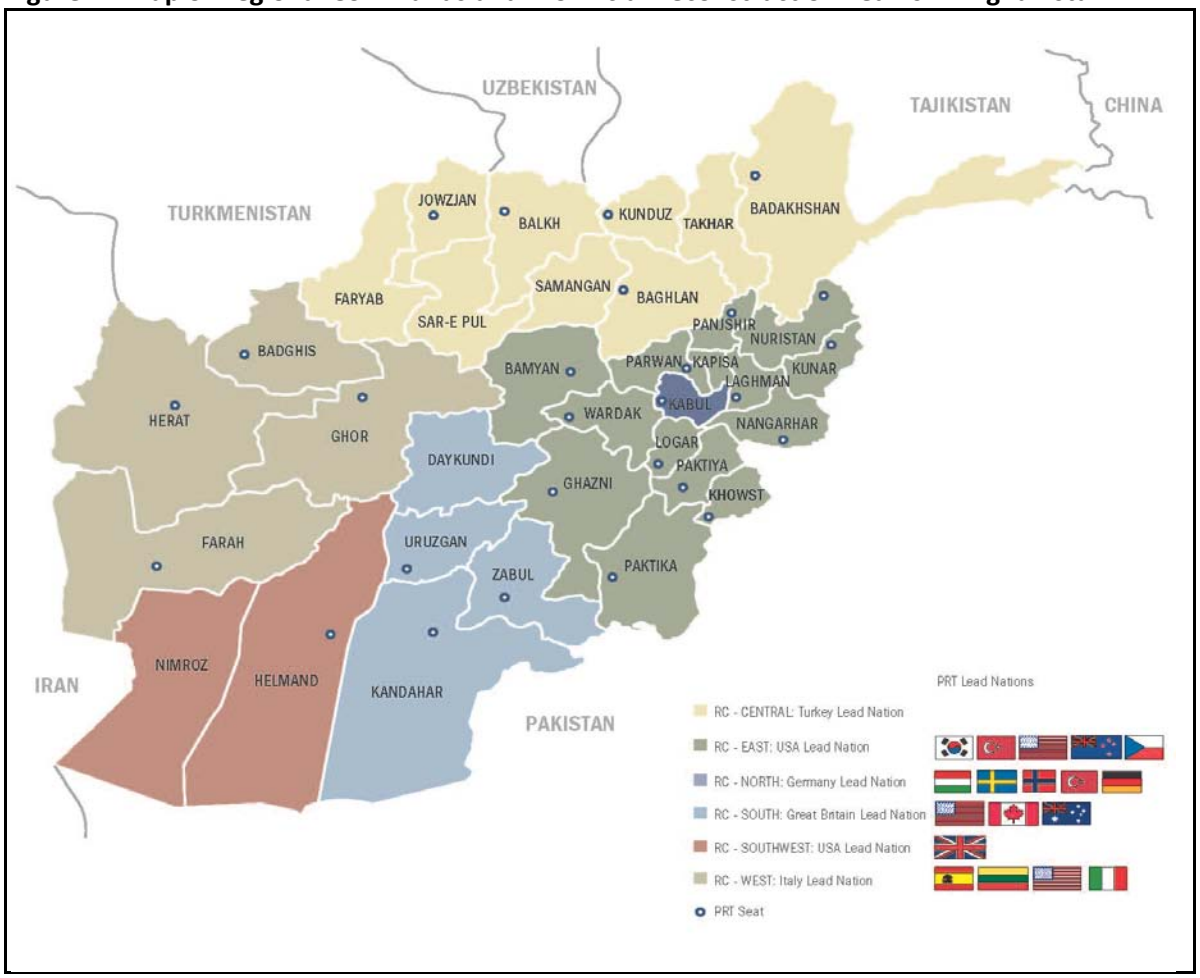
[7] The United States commands RC-East and RC-Southwest, Great Britain leads RC-South, Germany leads RC-North, and Italy leads RC-West.

facilitate greater civilian-military integration in the field.[8] A senior civilian representative leads each regional platform and oversees COM personnel in his or her respective region. The senior civilian representative serves as the counterpart to the military commander of the regional command, senior coalition civilians, and senior local Afghan officials in the region. The senior civilian representative ensures that all U.S. civilian efforts are integrated with ISAF efforts throughout their respective region and coordinates the work of all U.S. COM civilians within the region, ensures coherence of political direction and development efforts, and executes U.S. policy and guidance.

In RC-East, brigade task forces form the next supervisory and support level for COM civilians in the field. The United States leads four of these task forces while France and Poland lead the remaining two task forces; however, COM civilians are only assigned to the U.S. task forces. RC-South, RC-Southwest, and RC-West each have one brigade task force. However, these task forces are equal in authority to and do not provide supervision over the PRTs. The PRTs follow the brigade task forces, or regional platforms depending on the region, in the Mission field structure. PRTs are civilian-military organizations that implement efforts to build the capacity of the host nation to govern, enhance economic viability, and deliver essential public services, such as security, rule of law, justice, health care, and education. Of the 27 PRTs in Afghanistan, ISAF coalition partners lead 15 PRTs, the United States leads 11 PRTs, and U.S. and coalition personnel co-lead one PRT. Figure 2 shows the locations and lead nations of PRTs in Afghanistan.

[8] ISAF RC-Capital, the sixth ISAF RC, has responsibility for Kabul and is not included in the COM civilian field structure. Turkey leads RC-Capital.

Figure 2: Map of Regional Commands and Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan



Source: ISAF and U.S. Embassy Kabul IPA.

The DSTs form the newest level in the U.S. Mission Afghanistan field structure, with the first DSTs established in 2009. DSTs are subordinate to the PRTs in their respective provinces. These combined civilian-military teams conduct security, governance, and development activities in their assigned districts. DSTs are embedded with a military element. There are 35 total DSTs, 20 of which are located in RC-East.

U.S. AGENCIES HAVE DEPLOYED NEARLY 67 PERCENT OF CIVILIAN UPLIFT PERSONNEL AND HAVE GENERALLY MET LIFE AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS IN THE FIELD

Sixteen U.S. agencies, representing eight departments, are providing personnel as part of the civilian uplift in Afghanistan. The uplift will create an estimated 626 new positions over two phases and will contribute to increasing the number of personnel under COM from 320 in January 2009 to 1,516 by January 2012. Nearly half of these positions will be located in Kabul with the remaining half distributed across the various field locations throughout Afghanistan, including PRTs and DSTs. As of September 9, 2010, 418 personnel have deployed to Afghanistan, filling close to 67 percent of the total positions for both phases. Mechanisms are in place to address civilians' life and operational support needs in the field and have generally been met or addressed across the field locations. However, the operating environment in Afghanistan presents some challenges to providing this support.

Sixteen Agencies Have Provided Almost 67 Percent of the 626 Personnel Expected to Deploy as Part of the Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan

Sixteen U.S. agencies are contributing personnel as part of the civilian uplift in Afghanistan.[9] These personnel represent eight departments, including State, USDA, Homeland Security, Justice, the Treasury, Transportation, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and USAID. These personnel are implementing multiple programs to advance governance, rule of law, and development, which are three key lines of effort in U.S. reconstruction strategies (see appendix II). For example, both State and USAID are engaged in programs to advance governance and rule of law, such as mentoring Afghan government officials at both the national and sub-national levels. In addition, the U.S. Marshals Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation[10] are mentoring, training, and equipping Afghan law enforcement entities in an effort to promote rule of law.

In January 2009, prior to the March announcement of the civilian uplift, 320 U.S. civilians were assigned to the COM in Afghanistan.[11] By January 2012, the civilians under chief of mission are expected to increase in number to approximately 1,516 U.S. personnel. According to planning documents, 626 positions were created for the uplift.[12] The total size of personnel under COM and the exact number of uplift positions are in flux and subject to change. An Embassy Management official stated that, as of September 16, 2010, the projected size of the Mission in January 2012 may be closer to 1,400 U.S. personnel, as positions are currently being reassessed. Figure 3 shows the expected growth of COM personnel in Afghanistan from May 2009 to January 2012 based on U.S. Embassy Kabul projections as of August 26, 2010.

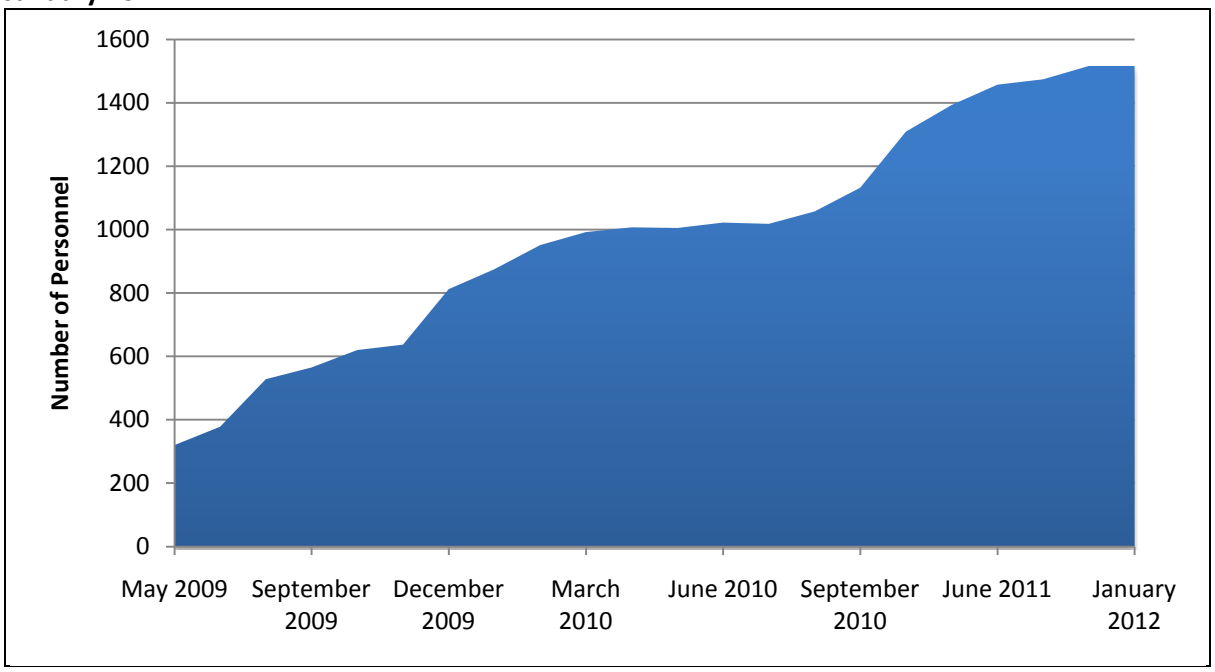
[9] While SIGAR is considered to be part of the overall increase in the size of U.S. Mission Afghanistan, the office and its staff are not included as part of the civilian uplift.

[10] The U.S. Marshals Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation are both agencies under the Department of Justice.

[11] In January 2009, 320 of the Chief of Mission's 531 authorized base positions were filled.

[12] The civilian uplift is part of an overall increase in the number of civilian personnel assigned to the U.S. Mission in Afghanistan. In addition to the 626 personnel filling uplift positions, 211 personnel will fill the remaining authorized base positions and another 359 positions will be created.

Figure 3: Estimated Growth of Chief of Mission Personnel in Afghanistan, May 2009 to January 2012



Source: SIGAR analysis of U.S. Embassy Kabul data.

Note: The data reflect U.S. Embassy Kabul staffing projections as of August 26, 2010.

The first phase of the uplift began in June 2009 and ended on December 31, 2009. This phase created 411 positions, and as of September 9, 2010, almost 96 percent of them have been filled by deployed personnel. The second phase of the uplift began in January 2010 and will conclude in December 2011 after adding approximately 215 more positions. Only 11 percent of these positions have been filled; however, this phase is expected to last for two years. Of the 626 new positions, it is estimated that 294 will be located in Kabul while 332 will be distributed across the various field locations. See table 1 for the number of positions authorized and filled as of September 9, 2010.[13]

[13] We did not include data on base positions under COM beyond those positions identified to be part of the civilian uplift. As a result, the agencies listed may have more positions and personnel in Afghanistan than are reflected in the following tables. For example, on September 9, 2010, Department of Justice agencies had a total of 186 personnel in country; however, only 21 of them deployed to Afghanistan as part of the civilian uplift.

Table 1: Authorized and Filled Positions by Civilian Uplift Phase, as of September 9, 2010

	Positions Authorized			Positions Filled			Filled as a Percentage of Total Authorized
	Phase I	Phase II	Total	Phase I	Phase II	Total	
Total Chief of Mission Afghanistan	**411**	**215**	**626**	**394**	**24**	**418**	**67%**
By Location							
Kabul	168	126	294	167	24	191	65%
Field	243	89	332	227	0	227	68%
By Department/Agency							
Department of State	146	134	280	161	18	179	64%
U.S. Agency for International Development	178	45	223	152	0	152	68%
Department of Agriculture	50	13	63	44	0	44	70%
Department of Homeland Security[a]	11	0	11	11	0	11	100%
Department of Justice[b]	18	12	30	17	4	21	70%
Department of the Treasury	4	8	12	8	1	9	75%
Department of Transportation[c]	3	2	5	0	0	0	0%
Department of Health and Human Services[d]	1	0	1	1	0	1	100%
Department of Commerce	0	1	1	0	1	1	100%

Source: SIGAR analysis of U.S. Embassy Kabul data.

[a] Department of Homeland Security positions include Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcements, and Transportation Security Administration.

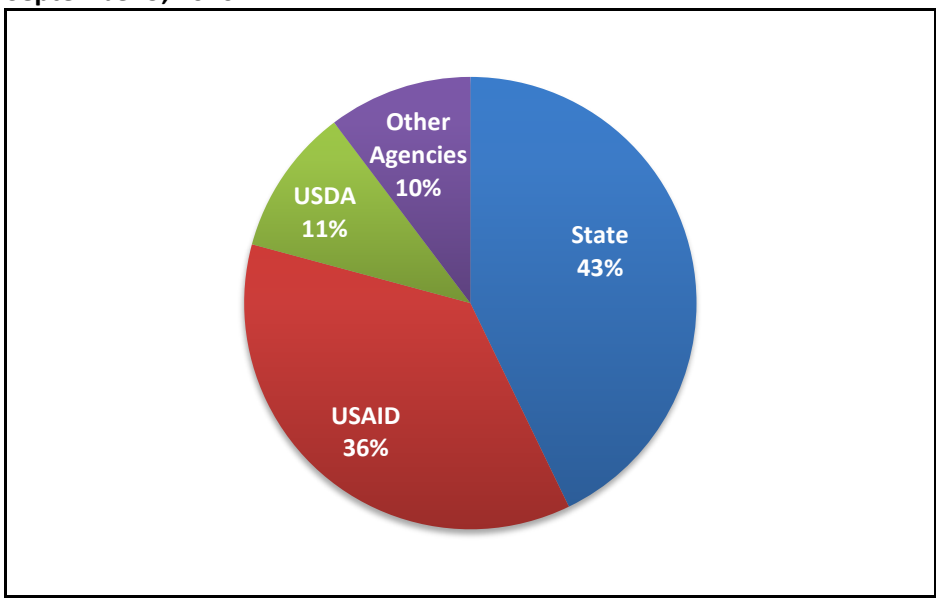
[b] Department of Justice positions include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and U.S. Marshals Service.

[c] Department of Transportation positions include the Federal Aviation Administration.

[d] Department of Health and Human Services position is filled by an official from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

State, USAID, and USDA contribute the greatest number of civilians to the uplift, accounting for almost 91 percent of the total number of uplift positions identified. Personnel from these 3 agencies have filled 375 positions, or 90 percent, of the total 418 positions filled as of September 9, 2010 (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Percentage of Filled Uplift Positions by Agency, as of September 9, 2010



Source: SIGAR analysis of U.S. Embassy Kabul data.

State, USAID, and USDA personnel accounted for all filled positions in the field as of September 9, 2010.[14] Table 2 shows the breakdown of filled positions by department and location.

Table 2: Filled Uplift Positions in Kabul and the Field, as of September 9, 2010

Department/Agency	Kabul	Field	Total
Department of State	103	76	179
U.S. Agency for International Development	36	116	152
Department of Agriculture	9	35	44
Other departments	43	0	43
Total	**191**	**227**	**418**

Source: SIGAR analysis of U.S. Embassy Kabul data.

As of July 12, 2010, approximately 51 percent of personnel in the field were located in RC-East, while 35 percent were assigned to locations in RC-South or RC-Southwest.

[14] The Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Administration also have personnel located in the field. However, the Embassy's staffing records count them as based in Kabul.

Mechanisms Are in Place to Meet Civilian Life and Operational Support Needs in the Field and Needs Have Generally Been Addressed

Mechanisms are generally in place to meet civilian life and operational support needs at the various field platforms across Afghanistan. These mechanisms include status documents that track key life and operational support requirements and formal agreements with U.S. military and coalition partners. Based on our review of Embassy documents, discussions with officials both in Kabul and at various levels in the field, and site visits to locations in RC-South and RC-East, civilian life and operational support needs generally appear to have been met or have been identified and are being addressed.

In June 2009, U.S. Embassy Kabul initiated an effort to track the status of life and operational support at the various field platforms. Status documents track 26 key requirements across four categories: communications, security, work, and service. Our review of documents for five locations in RC-South determined that there were no substantial deficiencies in the level of life and operational support provided in the field in that RC. [15] For example, COM civilians had housing, access to medical care, and some level of communications, such as internet access. In most instances where support needs had not yet been met, Embassy Kabul was taking steps to address them. In addition, many of the civilians we spoke to in the field from all five regions reported that they were receiving sufficient life and operational support. Further, civilian and military personnel participating in interagency life support working groups, which have been established at the national and regional levels to address concerns about life and operational support in the field, stated that there have not been any substantial issues with life and operational support in the field.

To ensure that the life and operational support needs of field personnel are met, U.S. Embassy Kabul signed formal agreements with U.S. military and coalition partners for the provision of life and operational support for civilians at field platforms. In August 2009, the Embassy signed two memoranda of agreement (MOA) with USFOR-A[16] and the ISAF Commander to provide life support, security, and mobility for COM civilians at U.S.-led platforms. In addition, the Embassy has memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Hungary, and Germany to obtain this support for COM civilians assigned to coalition-led platforms. Under the MOAs and MOUs, U.S. military and coalition partners agreed to provide U.S. COM civilians with residential housing, food, office space, emergency medical care, and on-site security. Further, U.S. military and coalition partners agreed to provide mobility support at platforms that are not self-drive.[17] Currently, the Embassy is negotiating additional MOUs with Italy, Spain, France, and New Zealand. In addition to the agreements with U.S. military and coalition partners, the Embassy concluded an interagency MOA with agencies that have a civilian presence in the field. The MOA specifies how the Embassy and participating agencies will fund the costs of supporting agency personnel in the field. Currently, USAID and USDA are the only agencies included, but other agencies may be added as the civilian presence in the field increases.

While most civilian life and operational support needs have been met, the unique operating environment in Afghanistan makes it challenging to provide some types of support to civilians in the field. For example, in April 2010, IPA conducted a survey of all PRTs and DSTs to obtain information on

[15] We reviewed status tracking documents for the following sites in RC-South: PRTs Zabul and Kandahar, and DSTs Maiwand, Panjway'i, and Spin Boldak. The three DSTs are located in Kandahar province.

[16] USFOR-A is the command that oversees all U.S. military facilities in Afghanistan.

[17] At self-drive locations, U.S. civilians can drive themselves to locations outside of the platform without direct military support. Civilians must adhere to specific Embassy Kabul security requirements during self-drive movements. The COM determines whether a field location is self-drive.

the status of mobility at each location. The results indicated that, among other factors, lack of adequate security, limited military assets, and low priority for missions at certain coalition-led locations limit mobility in some field locations. In some less secure areas, military assets are prioritized for security-related missions rather than governance and development missions; however, officials noted that sufficient security is necessary before civilians can implement governance and development efforts. In addition, the survey indicated that a lack of armored vehicles at self-drive locations limits civilian movements, and civilians we spoke to echoed this. To address this concern, Embassy Kabul is in the process of acquiring additional vehicles to send to the field.

Senior Embassy officials from the management office and IPA noted that COM civilian engagement with Afghan officials is more important than the number of movements personnel make outside of their platforms. For example, some PRTs and DSTs are collocated with provincial and district centers, respectively, allowing civilians to interact with local officials without leaving the platform. In other locations, Afghans frequently travel to the platform to meet with civilians. As a result, a senior IPA official stated that the office is drafting an engagement strategy to shift the focus on metrics that measure the number of civilian movements outside of platforms to metrics that provide data on how often civilians engage with Afghan officials at the platform or a different venue. This action should help the Embassy monitor whether personnel in the field are effectively engaging with their Afghan counterparts.

SEVERAL KEY AREAS WARRANT FURTHER EXAMINATION AS THE CIVILIAN UPLIFT PROGRESSES

A number of key areas merit further examination during the second phase of the civilian uplift. These areas include the effectiveness and quality of training for personnel in the field; the level of agency guidance for working in the field; the application of models for civilian-military integration; and civilians' ability to oversee implementing partners. In addition, the uplift's long-term sustainability is a concern. Although an interagency review of the uplift has been initiated to reportedly include an evaluation of recruitment, hiring, sustainability, and incentives, tentative plans for the review do not include a comprehensive examination of training needs, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration. Furthermore, the Embassy lacks a formal and systematic mechanism for collecting and implementing best practices and lessons learned in the field over the course of the uplift.

Field Staff Have Raised Several Areas of Concern Over the Course of the Civilian Uplift

During our review, we identified several topics of concern including training; guidance, civilian-military collaboration, oversight of implementing partners, and the uplift's long- term sustainability.

Limitations in Agency-Specific and Field-Related Training

Agency officials at all levels acknowledged that the process for hiring and placing field staff has evolved and improved over the course of the civilian uplift. Many of these officials stated, however, that existing training, although quite beneficial in many respects, should place more emphasis on agency-specific processes and procedures, and how to work under COM authority with military counterparts under field conditions.

According to agency officials, the focus during the uplift's earlier stages was to meet deadlines for getting personnel into the field. However, they pointed out that, over time, agencies have focused more on matching people to the appropriate positions and field locations. In addition, senior civilian officials

at the regional platforms stated that Embassy Kabul has made greater efforts to obtain feedback from the senior civilian representatives at the regional platforms during the hiring and placement process.

While some field personnel reported positive feedback on some aspects of the required training, they also stated that improvements were needed in such areas as agency-specific procedures, working within an interagency setting, field conditions, and civilian-military dynamics. Numerous officials from both USAID and State said that many civilians are new to the U.S. government or their current agencies, although they are technically qualified and experienced. As a result, they lack complete understanding of their agencies' missions and operating procedures. USAID field personnel indicated that more agency-specific training would have been helpful in program design or implementation; grants and cooperative agreements; or ways to work with implementing partners.

Several civilians from State, USAID, and USDA stated that the Embassy needs more realistic training on working under COM authority in an interagency context, at field locations, and with military personnel. Both civilian and military personnel have stated that they would benefit from further training on the precise dynamics and best practices of the civilian-military relationship, as well as more integrated civilian-military training. For example, one official stated that training should include more exercises and scenarios requiring conflict resolution between civilian and military personnel.

Furthermore, some Embassy officials expressed the opinion that there should be a requirement for field personnel to attend a 2-day introductory training at the Counterinsurgency Training Center-Afghanistan (CTC-A or COIN Academy) outside of Kabul either before or shortly after beginning their assignments. According to these officials, field personnel would benefit from a better understanding of how counterinsurgency concepts are implemented and how to work under field conditions. According to a senior Embassy management official, the Embassy has decided to make COIN Academy training required for field personnel, although it has not been decided whether to hold the Kabul-based training before or shortly after deployment to field locations. Logistics of transporting personnel to and from the training after deployment to the field is one factor to be considered in this decision, according to the official. On September 5, 2010, Ambassador Eikenberry signed an action memorandum directing all Chief of Mission field staff to attend training at the COIN Academy training center at Camp Julien. According to the U.S. Embassy, IPA and USAID are working with the COIN Academy training center to review the program of instruction and are prepared to provide support to a five day COIN leaders course and a three day follow-on district stability framework course.

In commenting on a draft of this report, the U.S. Embassy reported that a number of changes to the USAID training process have been made or are underway to address concerns expressed by field staff and by SIGAR. Reported changes include:

- increased emphasis on orientation with USAID programs in Afghanistan and clarification of the roles of USAID COTRs;
- initiation of USAID-specific training programs to include COTR/AOTR certification, democracy and governance fundamentals, and project development;
- enhancement of in-country orientation to ensure staff assigned to the field are aware of program and project activities implemented at the DST and PRT levels;
- development of on-line training to familiarize USAID employees with military structures, organizations, and systems; and

- development of district stability framework training to be conducted at the COIN Academy for all incoming field personnel.

Limited Guidance for Personnel on Some Aspects of Field Work

Many of the officials we spoke to pointed to a lack of clarity from their agencies on various aspects of their work in the field, including position roles and responsibilities; reporting and supervisory relationships within the field structure; the implementation of national development programs in the field; and IPA's role as it applies to work at field locations. Personnel received limited information on their roles and responsibilities before arriving at their assigned locations. Several officials noted that they were not provided full explanations of their expected functions in the field or, in the case of USAID, the locations of their assignments before they arrived in Kabul. Others pointed to unclear roles within an interagency structure, stating that field personnel from all agencies have broad, undefined job descriptions. To resolve some of these issues, officials in RC-East and RC-South are taking steps to draft more detailed position descriptions to provide more guidance to field personnel. As for advance notification of assignments for USAID personnel, IPA and USAID officials stated that the agency is addressing this issue and providing personnel earlier notification of their assigned locations.

Civilians we spoke with also pointed to unclear reporting and supervisory chains, with some civilians reporting directly to their agency counterparts in Kabul and others reporting through field-level platforms. In particular, these officials stated that the role of the civilian team leads in the field is unclear and should be better defined. For example, one RC-East guidance memo defines the roles of brigade task force and PRT civilian leads as coordinating and shaping stability operations within their areas of responsibility. However, according to several officials we spoke with in RC-East, this role should not include formal supervision of team members who are not within their agency. In addition, these officials stated that this guidance is not always implemented as intended. Alternatively, some management personnel stated that the civilian leads should be able to assume a more supervisory role in relation to personnel in their platforms from other agencies. To address this issue, according to senior IPA officials, IPA will soon issue guidance to help further clarify the reporting and supervisory chains and responsibilities among senior field personnel at different levels within the field structure. In addition, personnel have noted bottlenecks and inconsistencies in information flow between Kabul and the field. For example, on a 2-day site visit conducted in May 2010, senior USAID officials noted concerns about gaps in information flow between a regional platform and field program officers at the DST level.

Civilians in the field often lack information on national development programs that are implementing in their areas of operation. According to a 2006 interagency assessment of PRTs in Afghanistan, "…many DOS and USAID PRT representatives indicated that they did not have reliable access to information about national projects in their province. Their inability to provide comprehensive information about U.S. activities to PRT and regional commanders undermined civilian credibility and limited their ability to integrate their activities with national programs." During the course of this review, senior civilian officials stated that, in many instances, USAID field officers have no visibility over national funds available for the programs implemented in their areas. According to one USAID official, civilians in the field need knowledge of national programs and other development activities occurring in their areas to aid in the military's planning. When civilians cannot provide quick responses to their military counterparts, they are viewed as being ineffective, which can strain efforts at civilian-military integration. This lack of information is also deemed to compromise effectiveness on program oversight.

Further, civilians we met with in the field stated that they do not understand IPA's role and function as it relates to their work. IPA was criticized for not doing an adequate job of communicating with staff in the field and not being responsive to issues and problems. Others stated they would encourage IPA to do

more to demonstrate that it is providing useful operational support to field personnel. According to the U.S. Embassy, as of the first week of October 2010, the Embassy approved the new IPA mission statement and organizational structure and, on October 4, 2010, IPA issued guidance to the field defining IPA's roles and functions.

Inconsistent Models for Civilian-Military Integration

Some field locations have established and are implementing formal, integrated civilian-military collaboration structures, and some COM personnel we met with in the field advocated examining the extent to which such models can be applied to field platforms throughout Afghanistan. For example, Task Force Rakkasans within RC-East has adopted and implemented what they refer to as a "Board of Directors" model for civilian-military collaboration, both for the task force and the PRTs and DSTs in its area of operations. According to this model, military and civilian personnel jointly develop priorities, ensuring a balance between military and civilian missions. Military leadership, the civilian lead, and at least one civilian representing State, USAID, and USDA make joint decisions about what programs the platform will implement and set priorities for military and civilian missions requiring movement outside the platforms. Similarly, the civilian-led PRT in Uruzgan Province has employed a particularly strong emphasis on international integration as well as civilian-military integration, under the concept that security, development, and diplomacy are interlinked.[18]

Despite these models, the consensus among both civilian and military officials we spoke with is that civilian-military integration relies primarily on individual personalities even at platforms where more formal structures exist. Furthermore, an IPA summary of conclusions reached from interviews with approximately 50 State, USAID, and USDA personnel stationed throughout Afghanistan concluded that civilian-military integration is occurring because of personal tenacity rather than institutional planning. The summary added that there are no clear lines of communication for civilians in the field on how to act with the military portion of their PRTs, or how to delineate "taskings" from their military partners.

Although many civilian and military officials stated that civilian-military integration is going well, some cited challenges in developing the relationship, stemming from differences in organizational cultures and perspectives. Several civilian officials we spoke with expressed concern that, in certain geographic areas, civilians who are embedded with the military at the platforms are tasked and absorbed into the military operations with little time to devote to development activities or to program oversight. Several officials within the RC-East area of operations have expressed their opinion that the Board of Directors model or some kind of clearer guidance on civilian-military integration should be implemented and applied universally in Afghanistan. In commenting on a draft of this report, the U.S. Embassy noted that the board of director model used in RC-East is a useful construct that they will explore further in better integrating civilian and military activities.

Inability to Fully Oversee USAID's Implementing Partners

To ensure that its programs support the strategic goals of the U.S. government in Afghanistan and proper oversight is provided for projects across Afghanistan, USAID is undertaking a process to devolve some program oversight functions to field personnel. The process is ongoing and includes specific training to meet statutory and agency requirements. Nevertheless, certain factors, such as levels of expertise and mobility, present challenges to successfully transferring contract and program oversight to the field.

[18] PRT Uruzgan is currently led by an Australian diplomat after transitioning from Dutch civilian leadership on August 1, 2010. It consists of Australian, U.S., and Slovakian civilian personnel and military elements. Uruzgan Province transitioned from Dutch to U.S. military command on August 1, 2010.

Several USAID officials we spoke to stated that the authority of USAID field personnel to adequately oversee agency projects implemented in the field is limited.[19] To ensure that its programs support the strategic goals of the U.S. government in Afghanistan, USAID seeks to devolve greater program management and contract oversight authority to USAID representatives at the Regional Missions, PRTs, and DSTs. Devolution of contract authority for the field is specified in a draft USAID Mission Order. According to the draft order, USAID would assign Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs) to Kabul and the regional platforms, while designating activity managers at field platforms to work with the COTRs and implementing partners. Activity managers are responsible for daily management of one or more specific activities and report to the COTR. USAID field program officers may be delegated by COTRs as activity managers for USAID programs operating at the provincial or district levels within their areas of responsibility. As part of such devolution, USAID anticipated the need for specialized training to ensure accountability and to satisfy U.S. government regulations and USAID contract and grant oversight policies. One series of such trainings was reportedly scheduled for July 2010.

Because this process is still in its early stages, it is too soon to determine the extent to which USAID will devolve oversight authorities to the various levels in the field. However, civilian personnel have cited challenges to successfully increasing oversight. For example, many USAID field personnel, although they are technical experts, are new to the agency and have limited knowledge of program management processes and government contracting requirements. One senior USAID official stated that, because USAID has had difficulties recruiting senior officers for assignment in Afghanistan, there are few experienced, senior officers to provide new activity managers with leadership and guidance. Furthermore, poor security can limit the mobility of field officers, preventing them from providing necessary oversight of implemented projects. Another senior USAID official stated that many USAID field staff cannot get out of their compounds or bases because civilian movements for development purposes are considered a relatively low priority for military security details.

Sustainability of the Civilian Uplift at Current Levels May Be Difficult

One goal of the *Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy* is to sustain increased civilian staffing levels in Afghanistan beyond July 2011. Nevertheless, concern has been expressed that the civilian presence in the field may not be sustainable at planned levels. This is particularly true for USAID, which is drawing personnel from a decreasing pool of qualified applicants, many of whom are recruited externally. Furthermore, USAID is already facing difficulties recruiting career personnel for assignments in Afghanistan as many have already completed tours in the country. A July 2010 Embassy cable expressed similar concerns about State's limited pool of Foreign Service Officers, noting that approximately 20 percent of the Foreign Service Officers posted overseas are already serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Pakistan. In addition, the cable noted concerns with USDA's reliance on its domestic workforce to fill its positions.

[19]USAID's primary presence in Afghanistan is through its implementing partners in the field. These partners are directed by Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs) primarily located in Kabul, who administer and implement acquisition or assistance awards.

An Interagency Review of the Civilian Uplift Does Not Include a Comprehensive Examination of Training, Guidance to the Field, and Standardized Models for Civilian-Military Integration

During the course of our review, the Embassy, in conjunction with State department headquarters, began an interagency evaluation of the civilian uplift that includes a review of the sustainability of the increased civilian presence both in Kabul and the field. As of late July 2010, tentative plans called for this review to examine such issues as personnel recruitment and hiring, staffing levels, tour lengths, and incentive packages. Discussion in anticipation of the review touched upon preparing staff for assignments to the field. However, the issues raised did not include a comprehensive examination of training and guidance provided to civilian personnel working in the field. A key practice for effective workforce planning is to develop programs and processes, such as training and staff development, to build workforces that are tailored to agencies' unique needs. By including a comprehensive review of training and the guidance necessary for working in the field, agencies can better prepare civilian personnel for their assignments and provide them with the guidance they need to carry out their duties.

Furthermore, the issues raised in anticipation of the review did not examine how standardized models for civilian-military integration could be more broadly applied in the field. Successful civilian-military integration is a core principle of the *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan*. Further, according to best practices for interagency collaboration, agencies should work together to define and agree on their respective roles and responsibilities, and to establish standards and procedures for operating across agency boundaries. The application of such standardized models for civilian-military integration is necessary to move personnel in the field away from relying on ad hoc arrangements and individual personalities.

The Embassy Lacks a Formal Process for Collecting and Applying Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Another key practice for interagency collaboration is for agencies engaged in collaborative efforts to monitor and evaluate their efforts to enable them to identify areas for improvement. According to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report on strategic workforce planning, "Periodic measurement of an agency's progress toward human capital goals and the extent that human capital activities contributed to achieving programmatic goals provides information for effective oversight by identifying performance shortfalls and appropriate corrective actions."[20] Our discussions with civilian officials have revealed that the Embassy lacks a mechanism for formally and systematically collecting, analyzing, and implementing lessons learned at the field level.

One of the roles of IPA's Stabilization Tiger Team is to collect best practices and lessons learned from the field. Although the Tiger Team has responsibility for carrying out this task across all field platforms, it has a small staff and other competing priorities have prevented it from focusing on fulfilling this responsibility. For instance, starting in February 2010, the Tiger Team began a series of interviews with field personnel to learn about their experiences but then was tasked with other assignments that slowed the process. Although the team prepared and submitted a brief summary of issues stemming from some field interviews to the U.S. Embassy Kabul's executive office, no formal and systematic framework for capturing and applying lessons learned exists.

Officials in the field and at the U.S. Embassy Kabul advocated the creation of a larger team of individuals dedicated to lessons learned and best practices analysis and activities. Some have pointed to the Center

[20]See GAO-06-15, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration Among Federal Agencies*, October 2005.

for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) as a model for the Embassy's own formal mechanism. CALL is an organization focused on the collection, analysis, dissemination, and integration of lessons learned to support combat readiness for soldiers around the world.

One way to systematically collect data is to develop comprehensive surveys on a variety of issues that can facilitate quantitative analysis. This is a strategy central to program evaluation methodology. As part of our audit work for determining the levels of life and operational support and revealing key issues and concerns as part of the civilian uplift, SIGAR had planned to conduct a survey of chief of mission personnel in the field. However, due to objections by State, we were unable to disseminate the survey. These objections included concern with the survey's questions about life and operational support, the level of civilian-military integration, and challenges associated with working in the field as well as general demographic information, which State believed should not be part of SIGAR's review. Although we were able to talk to almost 40 civilians located in the field, the survey would have provided us, and the Embassy, with additional quantifiable information on issues in the field at a given point in time. A series of comprehensive field surveys over the course of the uplift would help monitor and evaluate the results of the civilian uplift and assist in identifying shortfalls and developing corrective measures. For example, such surveys could provide measurable indicators of effectiveness in the field and indicators that would help determine the magnitude of staff concerns about mobility.

CONCLUSION

The U.S. civilian uplift has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of U.S. government civilians in Afghanistan. With 16 departments and agencies represented, ranging from State and USAID to the Departments of Commerce and Transportation, the uplift will create 626 new positions in Kabul and the field, and contribute to tripling the size of Chief of Mission personnel in Afghanistan. In the field, civilians' life and operational support needs have largely been met, although Afghanistan's operating environment presents challenges in providing certain types of support. As the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and State department headquarters conduct their interagency review of the uplift, officials may need to examine provisions for training, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration to determine whether current processes are enabling U.S. government civilians to be effective in achieving U.S. strategic reconstruction goals. Further, a formal mechanism for collecting, analyzing, and implementing best practices and lessons learned over the course of the uplift—to include the design and implementation of a series of comprehensive field surveys—could help the Embassy to make the changes necessary to improve civilians' effectiveness in achieving these goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the interagency evaluation of the civilian uplift is comprehensive, SIGAR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan:

1. Include the following items as part of the interagency review: training, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration.

To formally monitor civilians' effectiveness in the field and identify shortfalls and necessary corrective actions, SIGAR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan:

2. Develop a mechanism for collecting, analyzing, and applying lessons learned and best practices, to include the design and implementation of a series of comprehensive field surveys.

COMMENTS

The U.S. Embassy Kabul provided comments on a draft of this report, which are included in appendix II. In its comments, the U.S. Embassy Kabul generally concurred with the report's recommendations and outlined actions it would take to address the report's recommendations, including:

- on-going curriculum reviews by IPA to meet the pre-deployment and field deployment training needs of field staff and plans to communicate the intent of civilian-military integration during training at the COIN Academy;

- changes to USAID's training program, in Washington D.C. and Afghanistan, including enhancements to in-country orientation and on-line training to familiarize USAID employees with military structures, organizations, and systems; and

- examination of the most effective ways to collect data from field staff.

Although the U.S. Embassy Kabul agreed with our recommendation to include training and required guidance for working in the field as part of the interagency review, it noted that agencies' headquarters in Washington, D.C. should be tasked to review training and analyze and apply lessons learned and best practices. Our recommendation states that these items as part of the interagency review, which includes members from the Department of State headquarters. We agree that the U.S. Ambassador alone is not responsible for developing and providing required training. However, we believe that the U.S. Embassy has a key role in this interagency review of the civilian uplift where these items should be addressed.

The U.S. Embassy Kabul agreed to examine ways to obtain observations and collect data from personnel in the field, but indicated that it is not likely conduct comprehensive field surveys. We believe comprehensive surveys would be an effective means to gather reliable information to determine if problems expressed by personnel are wide-spread. For example, such surveys could quantify staff views of whether they are receiving adequate mobility to engage with Afghan officials. We provided the Embassy with the survey questionnaire we developed during the course of this audit, which may be useful to the Embassy in the event they decide to utilize this method of gathering information from the field.

In addition, the U.S. Embassy Kabul emphasized the unity of effort among civilian agencies under COM and its application to civilian-military relations and the ability to accomplish the civilian uplift. The comments also noted significant challenges the U.S. Embassy Kabul faced in the managing the civilian uplift. In particular, one year assignments for Foreign Service Offices and others assigned to the U.S. Embassy Kabul severely restrict the amount of training that can be accomplished in the field. Ideally, the U.S. Embassy Kabul recommends all employees serve an 18-month assignment in Afghanistan, with any required training preceding assignment.

APPENDIX I: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR) review of the implementation of the civilian uplift in support of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. This report (1) identifies the types and number of personnel provided to implement the civilian uplift and assesses the extent to which the life and operational support needs of these personnel have been met, and (2) identifies key areas of concern raised during the initial stages of the uplift. We limited the scope of our audit to civilian personnel under chief of mission (COM) authority. Further, given the strategic focus on efforts at the sub-national level and the dramatic increase in civilian personnel expected to deploy to the field, we focused primarily on Department of State (State), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Agriculture (USDA) personnel assigned to regional platforms, brigade task forces, provincial reconstruction teams (PRT), and district support teams (DST) throughout Afghanistan.

To identify the types and number of personnel provided to implement the civilian uplift, we analyzed U.S. Embassy Kabul Management Office data, current as of September 9, 2010, and Office of Interagency Provincial Affairs (IPA) data, as of July 12, 2010, on current and projected numbers of positions created under the U.S. Chief of Mission in Afghanistan and personnel deployed to Afghanistan as part of the uplift and provided overall totals and subtotals by phase of the uplift, by agency, and by location. We also examined staffing data from the Regional Platforms. We reviewed U.S. policy and key strategies for Afghanistan, including the U.S policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan, the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, State's *Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy*, and Embassy Kabul and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan's (USFOR-A) *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan*. We also reviewed State and Embassy cables, staffing requests, and various Embassy section notes. In addition, we interviewed officials in Embassy Management, IPA, State, USAID, USDA, and the Departments of Justice and the Treasury. To assess the extent to which the operational and life support needs were met for additional personnel at the field level, we analyzed Embassy life and operational support status documents for five locations in Regional Command (RC) South to assess the level of support provided for COM civilians at those locations. We also reviewed Embassy Kabul memoranda of understanding and memoranda of agreement (MOA) with USFOR-A, the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, and coalition partners for the provision of life support, mobility, and security; an interagency MOA between State, USAID, and USDA for supporting agency personnel in the field; the results of IPA's April 2010 survey of field mobility; and Embassy cables. During June and July 2010, we conducted site visits to the following field locations in RC-East and RC-South to interview U.S. civilian, military, and coalition personnel: Regional Platforms East and South; Task Forces Wolverine and Rakkasans; PRTs Panjshir, Gardez, Sharana, and Uruzgan; and DSTs Zormat, Orgun East, Jaji, and Zardan. In addition, we interviewed officials in Embassy Management, IPA, State, USAID, and USDA at Embassy Kabul; senior civilian representatives for Regional Platforms East, North, South, and West; and field personnel transiting though Kabul.

To identify key areas of concern raised during the initial stages of the uplift, we reviewed U.S. policy and key strategies for Afghanistan, Embassy Kabul cables, and USAID draft mission orders and documents describing contract and grant oversight responsibilities. We also reviewed U.S. Government Accountability Office reports on key practices for interagency collaboration and strategic workforce planning as well as information on the Center for Army Lessons Learned. We conducted site visits to various field locations and interviewed civilian, military, and coalition personnel. In addition, we interviewed officials in Embassy Management, IPA, and USAID at the Embassy; senior civilian representatives; and field personnel transiting through Kabul. In August and September 2010, we provided preliminary briefings for the Assistant Chief of Mission at Embassy Kabul and the IPA Coordinator, and obtained information on current efforts and State's planned internal review of the civilian uplift.

As part of our audit, we planned to conduct a survey of all COM civilian personnel located in the field at regional platforms, brigade task forces, PRTs, and DSTs. This survey would have included questions on life and operational support; coordination with the military and other partners; supervisory and reporting chains; guidance and training; and demographic information on the person's agency, location, job title, and related prior work experience. This would have allowed us to obtain a comprehensive perspective with quantifiable data on issues that have arisen in the field during the initial stages of the uplift. However, due to objections by the Department of State, we were unable to disseminate the survey.

During the planning stage of the review, we considered whether the use of computer-processed data, internal controls, compliance with laws, regulations, or provisions of contracts and grant agreements, and fraud risk were significant to the audit objectives. We determined that none of these elements was significant.

We conducted work from April to September 2010 at various locations in Afghanistan in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The performance audit was conducted by SIGAR under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

APPENDIX II: U.S. AGENCY ROLES IN RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Table I lists the various departments and agencies involved in the civilian uplift, the strategic lines of effort they are contributing to, and examples of programs supporting these lines of efforts.

Table I: U.S. Departments and Agencies Contributing Personnel to the Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan

Department/Agency	Strategic Line of Effort	Example of Supporting Programs
Department of State	Governance, rule of law	Mentoring and advising Afghan government officials at the national and sub-national levels
U.S. Agency for International Development	Governance, rule of law, development	Mentoring and advising Afghan government officials at the national and sub-national levels; managing development programs, including the Local Governance and Community Development program and Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture
Department of Agriculture	Governance, development	Mentoring Afghan government officials at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, and local officials
Department of Homeland Security	Rule of law	Advising, mentoring, training, and equipping Afghan border, customs, and related entities to enforce Afghan customs and immigration law
Customs and Border Patrol	Rule of law	
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Rule of law	
Transportation Security Administration	Governance, development	Assisting with efforts to enhance airport and aircraft security by providing technical expertise to Afghan officials
Department of Justice	Rule of law	Mentoring Afghan prosecutors and judges in handling counternarcotics, corruption, and terrorism cases
Drug Enforcement Administration	Rule of law	Training and mentoring Afghan National Police and other law enforcement personnel
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Rule of law	
U.S. Marshals Service	Rule of law	
Department of the Treasury	Governance, rule of law	Advising and mentoring Afghan officials in the Ministry of Finance and line ministries on budget execution and audit capabilities
Department of Transportation	Governance, development	Advising Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation; assisting Afghan officials with a variety of issues, such as drafting civil aviation law and providing technical assistance on surface transportation planning
Federal Aviation Administration	Governance, development	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Development	Overseeing Department of Health and Human Services programs, including initiatives to improve maternal and child health
Department of Commerce	Development	Assisting with efforts to promote economic development, trade, and commercial relations

Source: SIGAR analysis of U.S. strategies for Afghanistan, agency documents, and interviews with agency officials.

Response to the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR) draft report on: "U.S. CivilianUplift in Afghanistan is Progressing but Some Key Issues Merit Further Examination as Implementation Continues," October 2010

CONTEXT OF THE CIVILIAN UPLIFT IN AFGHANISTAN

We believe it important that the SIGAR draft report note the context under which the civilian uplift has occurred. This complex buildup of logistics, security and management, in the face of severe obstacles, was accomplished at a breakneck pace and is unparalleled in our history. The brilliance of both the concept and the operationalization of it deserve recognition in the SIGAR report.

The civilian uplift could not have been accomplished without unity of effort. While unity of effort is a concept that requires refinement, its application under Chief of Mission (COM) direction represents a breakthrough in civilian-military relations.

Keeping with the unity of effort concept Embassy Kabul employs, SIGAR should replace State/USAID/USDA caveats with "under Embassy (COM/FO) direction." U.S. Embassy Kabul is unique in that USAID reports directly to the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs (CDDEA) and hence executes its program at COM direction – and as part of a unified team.

Keeping with the unity of effort theme, Figure 1, page 3, "U.S. Mission Afghanistan Field Structure is inaccurate and should be replaced with the "Unity of Effort" diagram (Tab 1, below).



1

One of the challenges we face is with the length of tours for Foreign Service Officers and others assigned to Post. Assignments to Embassy Kabul for most staff are generally only for one year and the summer rotation typically results in an extensive turnover, with loss of attendant experience. One year assignments severely restrict the amount of training that can be accomplished at Post. Considering that employees takes three breaks for a total of about 65 days, this means that 300 days is served on duty at Post. Ideally, employees would serve rolling 18 month assignments at Embassy Kabul (so long as this remains an unaccompanied post) with any required training preceding assignment. This would also give the Department a greater return on investment in language training for those positions which are language-designated.

Review of the SIGAR Draft Report.

The Embassy's response is in two parts. The first part is our response to the SIGAR official recommendations in the draft report and the second is the Embassy's comments on the report in general.

I. Embassy Responses to SIGAR Recommendations in Draft Report.

The draft report contains two official recommendations to ensure that the interagency evaluation of the civilian uplift is comprehensive. SIGAR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan:

1. Include the following items as part of the interagency review: training, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration.
2. Develop a mechanism for collecting, analyzing and applying lessons learned and best practices to include the design and implementation of a series of comprehensive surveys.

Response to Recommendation #1: *Include the following items as part of the interagency review: training, required guidance for working in the field, and standardized models for civilian-military integration.*

While we agree in general with SIGAR's recommendation on training and guidance, it should be noted that the U.S. Ambassador is the recipient of training, while Washington (largely through FSI) is the force provider of training. Therefore, it is the DC agencies (such as FSI, Main State, USAID Washington) that should be tasked to review training and analyze/apply lessons learned and best practices. Lessons learned are best gathered and analyzed from outside agencies.

Given the fluid operating environment, IPA, in consultation with FSI, anticipates on-going curriculum reviews to meet both the pre-deployment and field deployment training needs of field staff. Civ/mil integration in an operating environment where one size does not fit all is a

continuing challenge. Finally, the Embassy plans to address civ/mil integration during training at the COIN Academy to better prepare field staff for working in a civ/mil environment.

A number of changes in the USAID training process have been implemented, both in Washington and in Afghanistan, to address the concerns expressed by field staff, as well as by SIGAR. These changes include the following:

- The AID Orientation program is increasing its emphasis on programs that are currently active in Afghanistan and how they operate, as well as clarifying the role of AID's Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs).

- AID-specific training programs have been initiated, both in Kabul and abroad, such as COTR/AOTR certification, Democracy and Governance (DG) fundamentals, and project development. Note: A Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) is an individual who has been delegated oversight duties for a contract; Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR) refers to an individual who has been delegated oversight duties for a cooperative agreement or grant).

- Enhancements to in-country orientation to ensure that staff assigned to the field are aware of program and project activities being implemented at both the District (DST) and Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) levels.

- Development of on-line training at USAID University to familiarize USAID employees with military structures, organizations and systems. The most recent roll-out is an on-line course on military insignia.

- Development of District Stability Framework (DSF) training to be conducted at the Coin Academy for all incoming field personnel.

Further improvements are underway, to include:

- A short course on the basics of AID programming and project development, which would be included in pre-deployment training programs as well as offered at regional platforms for employees already in the field;
- Exploration of a condensed version of COTR training for non-career employees both pre- and post-deployment; and
- Expansion of DSF training to personnel already in the field. The USAID Mission is also in the process of developing a guide on the wide variety of financial resources available to field personnel in the implementation of their activities.

USAID has also streamlined its agency-specific orientation to ensure that field staff can move quickly to their field assignments after arrival in country. The administrative portions of the

orientation focuses more on agency-specific systems, such as time and attendance, performance evaluations, personnel management systems and vouchering, while the programmatic portions cover the development and stabilizations frameworks, the roles of implementing partners and project implementation at the provincial and district levels.

Still on the agenda for development are training/orientation programs on how best to improve working relationships between civilian and military workforces and how to establish better linkages between employees working at PRT/DST levels and their implementing partner colleagues working in the same geographic areas.

In the area of personnel assignments, USAID has instituted a system that provides for identification of specific positions for each employee at the time of their selection. It must be noted, however, that the clearance process can be a lengthy one, sometimes resulting in months between the date of selection and the time of arrival at post. During this interim period, program priorities may change, security conditions may deteriorate or improve, and current in country ground personnel may shift locations or depart Afghanistan prior to the completion of their assigned tours. The personnel management system must remain flexible to ensure that overall program objectives and priorities can be effectively staffed, recognizing that changes in assignment are to be the exception, not the rule.

USDA, in coordination with IPA, is currently undertaking a survey of all field-based agricultural advisors and major stakeholders in order to ensure that USDA resources are allocated to the highest priority areas and are directed to implementing the Afghanistan Coordinated Agricultural Strategy. Drafting and preparations for this survey began in summer of 2010 and represent an effort to collect, analyze and apply lessons learned and best practices from the initial field experiences. This exercise is fully consistent with the findings of the SIGAR report on U.S. Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan (Audit 11-2 Strategy and Oversight) and will be taken into consideration as the Mission codifies results of the recent Washington/Kabul workshop on the civilian uplift.

Response to Recommendation #2: *Develop a mechanism for collecting, analyzing and applying lessons learned and best practices to include the design and implementation of a series of comprehensive surveys*

Through the summer of 2010 the Mission benefitted from a Knowledge Management Transfer Team from S/CRS which spent several months instituting processes that will assist the roughly 85% transfer that occurs every summer. IPA has developed a system of interviews to capture Lessons Learned and Best Practices from field staff. IPA will continue to examine the most expedient ways to collect relevant information on Lessons Learned and Best Practices from the field.

In addition, for the past three years USDA has held annual 'lessons-learned' conferences for returned personnel in order to gather information about program operation and adjustments that should be considered. The most recent took place in September 2010 and was facilitated by the National Defense University. The Department of State and other interagency partners participated in that conference and the draft report will be forthcoming

II. Embassy General Comments on the SIGAR Draft Report.

In addition to the official recommendations, Embassy Kabul also offers the following responses to a number of issues highlighted in the draft report.

Comments by IPA on the SIGAR Draft Report

Regarding the issue that field personnel should attend a 2-day COIN Academy training (Page 11 of the SIGAR Audit):

- An Action Memorandum was signed by Ambassador Eikenberry on 05 September 2010 directing all Chief of Mission field staff to attend a COIN Training course at the COIN Academy Training Center at Camp Julien. The COIN Academy offers a five day COIN Leaders Course and a three day follow-on District Stability Framework Course. IPA and USAID are working with the COIN Academy Training Center to review the program of instruction and are prepared to provide support to both courses.

Regarding the issue of a lack of understanding among Chief of Mission field staff of the role and function of IPA and how this role relates to their field work (Page 12 of the SIGAR Audit):

- As of the first week of October 2010, the Mission Front Office approved the new IPA Mission Statement and Organizational Structure. On October 4, 2010, IPA issued guidance to the field which defines IPA's roles and functions. In addition, we utilize the IPA orientation, mandatory for all IPA staff, to introduce IPA to new staff, introduce key officers, and encourage regular contacts and visit.

Regarding the "common consensus" among both civilian and military officials that CIV/MIL integration relies primarily on individual personalities vice institutional planning structures (Page 13 of the SIGAR Audit):

- Above all, civ-mil integration is a "doctrine development" task, for which DC agencies are responsible. There is no textbook answer on how to integrate civilian and military activities. Only clearly defined constructs, time and training will provide a more efficient integration of civilian and military activities.

- That said, the Integrated CIV/MIL Campaign Plan (ICMCP) defines the roles of civilians within the Integrated Command Group construct. Furthermore, the ICMCP also establishes the civilian "chain of command." Proposed joint civilian and military training in the District Stability Framework (RC/East), and a common framework targeting key sources of instability, may also better integrate civilian and military activities. The Board of Director model used in RC-East is a useful construct which we will explore further, although its utility may be greatest in areas where the US has the lead on both the military and civilian side.

Regarding the observation that civilians embedded with the military are absorbed into military operations with little time for development activities and program oversight (page 13, SIGAR Audit).

- This is one of the principal reasons that we have Senior Civilian Representatives (SCRs) in the field; to creating strong linkages between the U.S. military and civilian component at the PRT/DST platform/task force level. However, we realize that on occasion the disparity in size of military forces compared to civilian staff in a given location creates difficulties for those who are tasked to stretch their time to cover routine daily and weekly meetings in a military combat environment. Senior Civilian Representatives (SCRs) and IPA will work with PRT/DST staff members to achieve a better balance.

Regarding the issue of the lack of a formal framework for capturing Lessons Learned/Best Practices from field staff (Page 15 and 16 of the SIGAR Audit).

- Post believes the real solution is for FSI to establish a "lessons learned/best practices" institute.

- At our level, IPA has been collecting lessons learned and best practices from Chief of Mission field staff since December 2009. IPA's standard operating procedure is to conduct interviews with departing staff as part of their clearance procedures. Over eighty (80) interviews have been conducted with field staff. IPA also interviews civilians passing through Kabul on their way to or from their R&R breaks and those who have been in their present field positions for at least three months. IPA staff presents these lessons learned/best practices findings to the COIN Academy Training Center and to the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute. The IPA staff is assessing how best to disseminate lessons learned/best practices findings to a wider audience of field staff in all phases of their deployment.

Regarding the Page 16 Audit finding which suggested that a series of comprehensive field surveys over the course of the uplift would serve as a useful component of the uplift planning process:

- While a series of surveys could provide additional useful insights, the operating environment in the field will likely hamper collection of such data. Connectivity difficulties, the field staff's limited time and additional human and financial resources necessary to manage such a survey are factors to be considered. IPA has chosen the human-human interaction of capturing lessons learned/best practices from field staff in Kabul where they are less preoccupied with field taskings and conditions. Finally, the human-human interaction allows for a change in how the interview is conducted if a (effective?) stabilization/COIN practice is uncovered. Such newly uncovered information can add substance to a possible Stabilization/COIN case study for review by field staff, policy makers and scholars. In addition the IPA Training Team intends to conduct periodic field visits to directly canvas staff on specific issues.

Embassy of the United States of America
Kabul, Afghanistan

UNCLASSIFIED

October 21, 2010

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry

THROUGH: Deputy Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne
Assistant Chief of Mission, James R. Keith

FROM: CDDEA, Ambassador William Todd

SUBJECT: Response to Draft SIGAR Report, Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan

CONTEXT

SIGAR has prepared a draft audit report titled, "U.S. Civilian Uplift in Afghanistan is Progressing but Some Key Issues Merit Further Investigation as Implementation Continues." We forwarded the audit to the staff for review and compiled the response at Tab 1 based upon the comments received.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the response to SIGAR at Tab 1.

Approve_____ Disapprove_____ Let's discuss_____

Attachments:
Tab 1 – Post Response to Draft SIGAR Audit on U.S. Civilian Uplift
Tab 2 – Draft SIGAR Audit on U.S. Civilian Uplift
Tab 3 – Amb Eikenberry's Comments on draft SIGAR Audit

(This report was conducted under the audit project code SIGAR-021A).

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