

(1) US program...

business-related projects to reduce violence by encouraging Afghans to focus on economic activity rather than fighting. However, the SIGAR report, showed the program to be inept and beyond the Defense Department's capabilities.

"Because important documents and data were not consistently collected or retained, we could not fully assess the extent to which the \$675 million obligated by TFBSO was spent effectively," the report said.

TFBSO often had unrealistic expectations in project execution and it failed to account for local factors including politics, culture, weather, and security, SIGAR said.

Much of the \$70 billion spent to train Afghan armed forces has been wasted. Here's how to do better.

The report says that TFBSO did not clearly articulate its intended mission, objectives, and strategy until more than 2.5 years after it entered Afghanistan.

TFBSO's lack of a strategy, coupled with the confrontational style of TFBSO's early leadership and a lack of policy direction from State and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFORA), brought it into almost immediate conflict with USAID and State, and also strained TFBSO's early relationship with the Commander of USFOR-A.

Furthermore, TFBSO did not consistently coordinate its activities with other US government stakeholders in Afghanistan—namely State, USAID, and USFOR-A—leading to conflicting projects and wasted money.

TFBSO's poor coordination with other agencies diminished its ability to align its activities with the priorities of the USFOR-A Commander and the US Ambassador to Afghanistan.

SIGAR says that it has reviewed the following specifications in the report. The Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO) was a temporary organization created by the Department of Defense (DOD) to support operations in Iraq.

However, in 2009, DOD redirected TFBSO to carry out economic development projects in Afghanistan. TFBSO operated in Afghanistan from 2010 through 2014. Congress appropriated approximately \$823 million for TFBSO operations in Afghanistan, and according to contracts we were able to review, TFBSO obligated more than \$675 million in contracts.

Of that amount, \$316.3 million was obligated in direct support of projects related to agriculture, banking, oil and gas, indigenous industries, and mining. Of the remaining \$359.5 million, approximately \$299.8 million was obligated on indirect costs in support of TFBSO's projects and \$59.7 million on general and administrative costs.

SIGAR conducted this audit at the request of Senator Charles E. Grassley and then-Senator Kelly A. Ayotte. They sent separate letters in January 2016 requesting that SIGAR conduct a comprehensive performance audit of all TFBSO programs and activities in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(2) Ask Your Ministers ...

government offices."

A number of other Wolesi Jirga also held similar views, saying lawmakers referred to government branches because of unresolved problems of people.

Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the National Assembly had granted its authorities by the law not by someone else.

"Representing people is one of the main responsibilities of lawmakers given by the law and they are obliged to refer to government offices in order to help address their clients' problems."

Ibrahim said if the government performance had been in compliance with the law and appointments made based on meritocracy and justice, lawmakers would have never visited public organizations.

"We will invite the Minister of State for parliamentary affairs and send a clear and decisive message to the government that we will no longer visit any ministry and that ministers should come to the Wolesi Jirga for addressing problems of lawmakers' constituents." "We are public representatives and we do not belong to government. This is a 'total unjust' that the government or the president treats the National Assembly like this." (Pajhwok)

(3) Women Are ...

constructed with glass. There is safety inside every office when the doors are closed," he said.

According to figures by the commission, the appointment of women in government institutions in the current solar year - March 2017 to March 2018 - shows a one percent increase compared with the solar year 1395 - March

2016 to March 2017. (Tolonews)

(4) Pakistan Mulls ...

supplies are shipped through the southern Pakistani port of Karachi, where they then are placed on trucks and transported on a week-long journey to neighboring Afghanistan via the northwestern Torkham border crossing.

"NATO people told us it would be extremely convenient for them in terms of quick transportation of supplies from Gwadar directly to Kandahar. They are very interested and we are working on it," Bizenjo told VOA in an interview. The Chinese-built, Arabian Sea port of Gwadar is in the southwestern Baluchistan province adjoining Afghanistan's Kandahar province, which hosts one of the five U.S. military bases in the war-shattered country.

Gwadar port is connected to the Chaman border crossing with Kandahar through a newly constructed highway, enabling truck convoys to reach Afghanistan in fewer than 24 hours.

Pakistani minister Bizenjo said companies dealing in Afghan transit trade also want their cargo to be shipped completely through Gwadar.

"Another meeting with Pakistani business and NATO representatives and Afghan transit trade dealers has also been scheduled to further the discussions, Bizenjo said, without saying when.

Pakistan earned the status of non-NATO ally for allowing U.S.-led international forces to use the GLOC and ALOC supply lines to invade Afghanistan in 2001 and oust the Taliban from power for harboring al-Qaida leaders. In return, Islamabad received U.S. security assistance and civilian aid.

The proposal to redirect U.S. and NATO military cargo from Karachi to Gwadar comes as Pakistan's traditionally rollercoaster relations with the United States suffer fresh setbacks.

It started with a New Year's Day tweet by U.S. President Donald Trump in which he accused Islamabad of providing havens to terrorists fighting in Afghanistan despite receiving over \$33 billion in aid in the last 15 years. Subsequently, the Trump administration suspended security assistance to Pakistan until it takes "concrete" steps against militant hideouts on its soil.

Islamabad promptly rejected Trump's comments as "unwarranted" and "completely incomprehensible," saying it was being scapegoated for U.S. failures in Afghanistan.

Officials also maintain that Pakistan has received around \$14 billion, not as aid, but as reimbursement for money spent on deploying security forces on the Afghan border and conducting counterterrorism operations in support of the U.S.-led mission. They say Washington still owes Islamabad around \$9 billion.

The tensions have led to negative public statements coming from both sides; but, Pakistani and U.S. officials have both dismissed the widespread impression that Trump's Twitter comments pushed the relationship to the brink of collapse and that Islamabad intended to shut down the NATO supply lines.

Pakistan blocked the ground lines of communication for months after a 2011 attack by the NATO air force accidentally hit two Pakistani border posts, killing more than two dozen Pakistani soldiers. The lines were restored only after the U.S. military formally apologized for the incident.

A U.S. government source tells VOA a "robust ongoing" bilateral dialogue is on track between the two countries, particularly their militaries. A U.S. military delegation was in Islamabad on Monday. Late last week, Pakistan's army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, had a phone conversation with General Joseph Votel, the CENTCOM commander.

Army spokesman Major-General Asif Ghafoor told VOA the contact helped remove any "apprehensions" about future cooperation. "Cooperation and not coercion is the way forward," Ghafoor said. Pakistani Senator Mushahid Hussain, who heads the defense affairs committee of the upper house of parliament, told VOA his country has allowed U.S. and allied forces to undertake more than "one million overflights free of charge" since 2001 to conduct counterterrorism and other missions. "The U.S. needs Pakistan more than we need it because of our location, because of our role and because of the options (available to Islamabad)," Hussain said. He was referring to Islamabad's deepening ties with China, Turkey, Iran and improving relations with Russia.

The senator, however, noted that despite the latest strains in mutual ties, the GLOC and ALOC lines remain operational because Pakistan is committed to supporting efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Pakistan is considered the safest and cheapest route to resupply NATO troops. Other possible routes that go through Iran and central Asian countries are more expensive and pass through a region Russia considers its backyard. Tensions between the United States and Russia have been high since Moscow was accused of meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

"Without Pakistani cooperation, our army in Afghanistan risks becoming a beached whale," wrote former U.S. diplomat Richard Olson in an article for The New York Times this week.

"Pakistan has greater leverage over us than many imagine," noted Olson, who served as ambassador to Afghanistan and Pakistan before being appointed as U.S. special envoy for both the countries by the previous administration of President Barack Obama. (VoA)

(5) 71 Pardoned ..

officials, as many as 3,000 individuals, among them 145 women, are being held inside the jail.

The inmates were freed on the eve of a planned release of about 81 political prisoners belonging to the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) from the Pul-i-Charkhi Jail east of Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(6) Abdullah Wants ...

government organs had repeatedly conferred with Pakistani officials on the issue.

Addressing the cabinet, Abdullah asked Afghan government officials and their international partners to work together on answering the humanitarian problem. The issue must not be politicized, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(7) Global Conference ...

An effective disparity between the member states was Rahimullah Yousafzai, an experienced correspondent in Media of Pakistan mentioned that among the journalists from the eight countries of the SAARC, have been loosed the opportunity to participate and could not attend the conference.

For example, he recalled two Indian journalists and an Afghan correspondent that two Indian correspondents were unable to obtain a visa from Pakistan.

Hossein Abdul Rahman, consultant for the Kuwaiti journalists' association, said the Pakistani Media Development Foundation's Media Development Initiative and the Sindh leadership have been good and timely game so that the Pakistani government can pay attention to Europe, America and Africa for the charges that are currently taking place in Pakistan around the world.

"Make a change in their minds," he added that during the conference and meetings with the Karachi authorities, new journalists were employed and the young people of the continents were working in different ways to make their views more manageable. It should be noted that the conference was attended by reporters from European, American and African countries and reporters from the countries of SAARC.

United States' Jim Bouwelha, who is treasurer of International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) USA, who is pleased to be present at the meetings, especially in the city of Karachi, is undoubtedly a combination of different parts of the world and a different view of the current situation.

He spoke in most of his speeches at High Officials visits, Karachi, and the game described the city of Karachi as effective in the events of the International Media Conference and said that undoubtedly well-known journalists from the conference countries will partner with their readers through the media they are working on. But some non-professional activities criticized some of the media in the city of Karachi, especially the Daily Azadriast of the presidency is far from the ethics of journalism, which does not mean anything other than advertisements of something incomplete, and this is a major milestone in journalism.

The Pakistan Media Development Foundation successfully completed the 2nd International Media Conference made declaration for the implementation these points

The Journalist will uphold the principle of truth.2.In any circumstances they will work for the public interest. Fight for the best ethical standards in their respective countries.

Will foster good journalistic relations among the participating countries. Will strive for the welfare of the employees working in media.

Will promote independent journalism. Work for the right of access to the information. Work for removal of gender bias.

Will try utmost to bridge the gap among various countries in the field of

journalism.

Pledge to abide with principles of journalism in particular opposition to that speech and violence.

It is worth mentioning that this is the 2nd International Media Conference in Pakistan, hosted by the National Media Development Foundation, which was established two years ago at its first center in Islamabad, the capital of the country. (Pajhwok)

(8) Insecurity, Impassable...

cooperation with government as people's access to health services is the goal of NGOs," he said.

He said currently 43 non-profit organizations were offering health services to people in the framework of ACBAR. Dr. Sayed Mohsin Hashemi, deputy SCA head, also said insecurity, using medical centers as trenches and using health facilities as a pressure tool by rebel groups were major challenges for health services in the country.

He said lack of female personnel was another challenge in the health area.

Maki Seyawosh, head of Kabul Orthopedic Organization, said her organization was working for rehabilitation of people with disabilities and making artificial organs for them.

She said they had treated 2,900 children with 70 percent of them recovering over the past two years.

The lack of an accurate statistics about the number of people with disabilities prevented health services from reaching people as required, she said. (Pajhwok)

(9) Afghanistan Receives...

strengthen Afghanistan-Uzbekistan relations.

"When Uzbekistan got its independence, we tried from the first day to help the people of the country Afghanistan," he said.

Meanwhile, Abdul Bashir Tawhidi, deputy and acting governor of Balkh, said the aid was a sign of friendship between the two countries.

"The friendship between the two countries (Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) is not new. This friendship goes back to the time when the name of Afghanistan was Khurasan. We had friendship and love with Uzbekistan," he said.

In December, Afghan and Uzbekistan officials signed more than 20 agreements which include economic, transit, security, electricity, agriculture, health and higher education cooperation between the two countries. (Tolonews)

(10) More than 1,370..

Tasal, a member of the group, said about 327 individuals lost their lives and 924 others wounded in suicide attacks claimed by Daesh.

He said in foreign forces airstrikes most of the casualties happened in Nangarhar, Herat, Kunduz and Uruzgan. Sixty-two individuals had been killed in foreign airstrikes and 167 suffered casualties as a result of Afghan Air Forces strikes, he added.

The group called on the Afghan government and other actors to take seriously the rights of civilians and their protection and prosecute and punish those involved in such incidents.

The human rights organization noted in this situation the Afghan government needed to prepare and approve a civilian protection law to protect civilians.

The group also urged foreign troops to take seriously humanitarian and human rights of people in operations in residential areas. (Pajhwok)

(11) Probe Team ...

to recuperate the money which belongs to the people of Afghanistan and transfer it to the national revenues," said Abdul Qadirzazai Watandost, head of the probe team.

The lawmakers have referred the cases of these companies to the Attorney General for further investigation.

"We will put the report forward for voting, those who agree with the report, raise your green cards and those who oppose the law raise your red cards, the report is approved, we will send it to the attorney general," said speaker of parliament Abdul Rauf Ibrahim. "The attorney general's office itself needs to be overseen," said MP Arif Rahmani. Meanwhile some MPs have said that a number of these companies allegedly resorted to the illegal action in cooperation with mafia elements inside government and they still continue their illegal process.

"This report is really shocking, in a country where the people are hungry, over \$32 million USD has been embezzled," said MP Ramazan Basahadordst. "Government officials are involved in the issue, the mafia has also a share in it," said MP Dawoud Kalkani.

"When the parliamentary report is sent to us, we will study all aspects of the report," said Ajmal Abdul Rahimzai, the finance ministry's spokesman. Fifteen years ago, the Afghan government and the foreign forces stationed

in the country signed an agreement that foreign troops were not required to pay tax on their fuel coming in to Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(12) Projects worth ...

had their buildings rebuilt. In the area of health, the local administration took effective steps to provide better services.

Required equipment was purchased for the Jalalabad Zonal Hospital, Kidney Hospital and Fatimat-ul-Zahra Hospital.

The emergency department was activated at the Chaparhar district hospital. Hundreds of motorcycles and dozens of ambulances were provided to the Public Health Department.

Mangal said two electricity transformers were also installed and a major power project benefitting thousands of people implemented last year.

He said the industrial sector was also boosted as 30 more factories were opened in the Sheikh Mesri Industrial Township alone.

Many education, health, agriculture and industrial projects were completed successfully in different districts. He said the construction of a 14 kilometers road worth 167 million afghanis was ongoing in Kama.

Besides the development effort, the security situation was also paid attention. None of Nangarhar's districts had fallen to rebel groups, he claimed. Meanwhile, a number of public representatives and residents appreciated the local administration's performance in the reconstruction area. However, said fighting corruption, security problems and some other parts were not paid enough attention.

Provincial Council Secretary Zabihullah Zamarai, said he had personally traveled to Kabul with the governor in quest of projects for Nangarhar. But he faulted the projects supervision process. The quality of most schemes was poor and they might be unraveled soon, he believed.

Another provincial council member, Ashab Wali Muslim said the governor paid due attention to uplift projects but the security problem, corruption, and issues in the education sector still persisted. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pakistan Embassy ..

duly filled in Pakistan Visa Form and Registration Form along with certified copies of passports, Tazkira and Shahadatnama.

The embassy asked students to send queries, if any, in this regard at scholarships@pakembassykabul.com (Pajhwok)

(14) 8 Daesh, 7 Taliban...

(NDS) personnel and promised work for their country's development.

"The Daesh group was spearheaded by Commander Abdul Manan and the Taliban group by commander Faridullah, they renounced violence and joined the peace process," he added.

He said the militants had been operating against government in Khogyani, Pachirawgam and Chaparhar districts. During the ongoing year so far 166 militants including 44 Islamic State (IS) rebels had joined the peace reconciliation process in Nangarhar.

Commander Faridullah said: we received training in Pakistan and were active in the three districts."

Since the peace reconciliation process started in the province, 861 armed men had joined the peace process. (Pajhwok)

(15) New Findings ...

Ghazni, Nawah, Zankhan, Gero, Ajristan, Gelan, Dahyak, Andar, Waez and Khogyani are dealing with high security threats.

Despite the complicated security situation, there are people in Ghazni who are optimistic about their future.

"We tried to create a peaceful (environment) for youths in Ghazni," said Mohammad Zamir Hadad, a computer science student in Ghazni.

"In some places, the security condition is not good," said a resident of Ghazni, Narendra Singh. "We hope that Allah helps our nation to live in peace," said another student, Sayed Jan Agah Bakhtyar. (Tolonews)

(16) Youth-Run ...

work very professionally and also get the opinion of the customer," said Idres.

Currently Asara has two agencies and over 30 youths work for the company. Ebad Ghafar, one employee, said he is very happy that the company has provided him with a job opportunity. He said that youths should be supported.

"Before this I had worked somewhere else as well, but here it is different. Here I found the environment so friendly," Ghafar said. The company's management said they are trying to encourage youths to start small and medium sized businesses to increase job opportunities in the country. (Tolonews)