
**OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL
FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION**

**INSPECTION OF FARUKH SHAH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT IN KAPISA PROVINCE:**

**PROJECT COMPLETION APPROVED BEFORE ALL
CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS MET**



October 26, 2009



SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

**400 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22202**

October 26, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Commander, United States Forces-Afghanistan

Commander, Combined Joint Task Force-82

SUBJECT: SIGAR Inspection Report 10-1: Inspection of Farukh Shah School Construction Project, Kapisa Province: Project Completion Approved Before All Contract Requirements Met

This report provides observations, findings, and recommendations of an inspection of a school construction project funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program and managed by the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). This inspection focused on the management, design, and construction work for the Farukh Shah School located in the Nijrab District of Kapisa Province. This project cost the U.S. government approximately \$150,000 dollars. It is one of 12 school construction projects initiated by the Kapisa PRT during the past 18 months.

The Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) conducted the inspection between June and August 2009. A summary of our report is on page ii. When preparing the final report, we considered written comments submitted by US Forces-Afghanistan and incorporated information provided from these comments, as appropriate, into the report. These comments are reprinted in Appendix C of this report.

The inspection was conducted under the authority of Public Law 110-181 and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; and performed in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Sands-Pingot", is located below the text "Very respectfully,".

Guy Sands-Pingot
Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction



SIGAR

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

Summary of Report: SIGAR Inspection 10-1

October 26, 2009

Inspection of Farukh Shah School Construction Project in Kapisa Province: Project Completion Approved Before All Contract Requirements Met

Why SIGAR Did This Inspection –

SIGAR conducts inspections of Afghanistan infrastructure reconstruction projects to determine whether U.S. funds are used appropriately, contract terms are met, adequate oversight is provided, and the project can be maintained upon turnover to Afghan authorities.

What SIGAR Inspected -

SIGAR inspected the Farukh Shah School project in Kapisa Province between June and August 2009 and conducted onsite inspections of the school construction work on June 21 and August 12, 2009. The school was built at a total cost of approximately \$150,000 using Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds. The project was developed by the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and approved for implementation in January 2007 with an initial performance period of 270 days.

What SIGAR Found –

- *Project Closed Out With Work Remaining:* Although PRT officials closed out this project in August 2009, almost 2 years behind schedule, a number of construction requirements remained unfinished. PRT officials explained that they approved the project for close-out due to a need to complete CERP projects approved in fiscal year 2008 before the end of fiscal year 2009. They also explained that they were under pressure from local Afghan authorities, who stated that they needed the school in its "as-is" condition because students and teachers were using an inadequate outdoor area for instruction. SIGAR believes closing out the project was premature since significant work remained to be performed to complete the school building, latrine, guard house, power plant, hand pump, and site clean-up.
- *Design Deficiencies:* SIGAR also found two project flaws that could affect the long-term viability of the school infrastructure. Improper grading, including a lack of terracing to mitigate the effects of soil erosion, and the absence of a retaining wall increases the risk that landslides will eventually damage structures on the school compound. SIGAR believes both these items should have been anticipated and included in the project's scope of work.

What SIGAR Recommends -

SIGAR recommends that the Commander of the Kapisa PRT:

- Issue a follow-up contract to address the construction deficiencies noted in this report.
- Place greater emphasis on developing detailed scopes of work which anticipate and address critical design issues that are particular to each construction project rather than relying solely on standard design plans.

For more information, contact SIGAR Public affairs at (703) 602-8742 or PublicAffairs@sigar.mil



Views of the rear portion of the perimeter wall which is inadequate to protect the Farukh Shah School compound from rock slides on left, and improper grading on right that places the school compound at risk. (Photos provided by SIGAR).

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Inspection Objectives

SIGAR conducts inspections of Afghanistan infrastructure reconstruction projects to determine whether U.S. funds are used appropriately, contract terms are met, adequate oversight is provided, and the project can be maintained upon turnover to Afghan authorities.

SIGAR inspected the Farukh Shah School construction project managed by the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), which is a component of United States Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), between June and August 2009 and conducted onsite inspections of the school construction work on June 21 and August 12, 2009.

Details on our inspection scope and methodology are provided in Appendix A.

Project Background

In support of Afghanistan's educational goals, the United States has sponsored the construction of hundreds of schools and educational facilities throughout Afghanistan since 2002. As part of this effort, the Farukh Shah School reconstruction project was proposed by the Kapisa PRT in late 2006 and approved for implementation in January 2007. Located in Nijrab District, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan (see Figure 1), the project was designed to serve an isolated community with a growing population of children that currently have no adequate school facility.

The site selected for the construction of the school and its compound was previously occupied by a small and dilapidated structure that served as a school house for local children. This structure was inadequate for the large number of school age children who needed to attend classes.

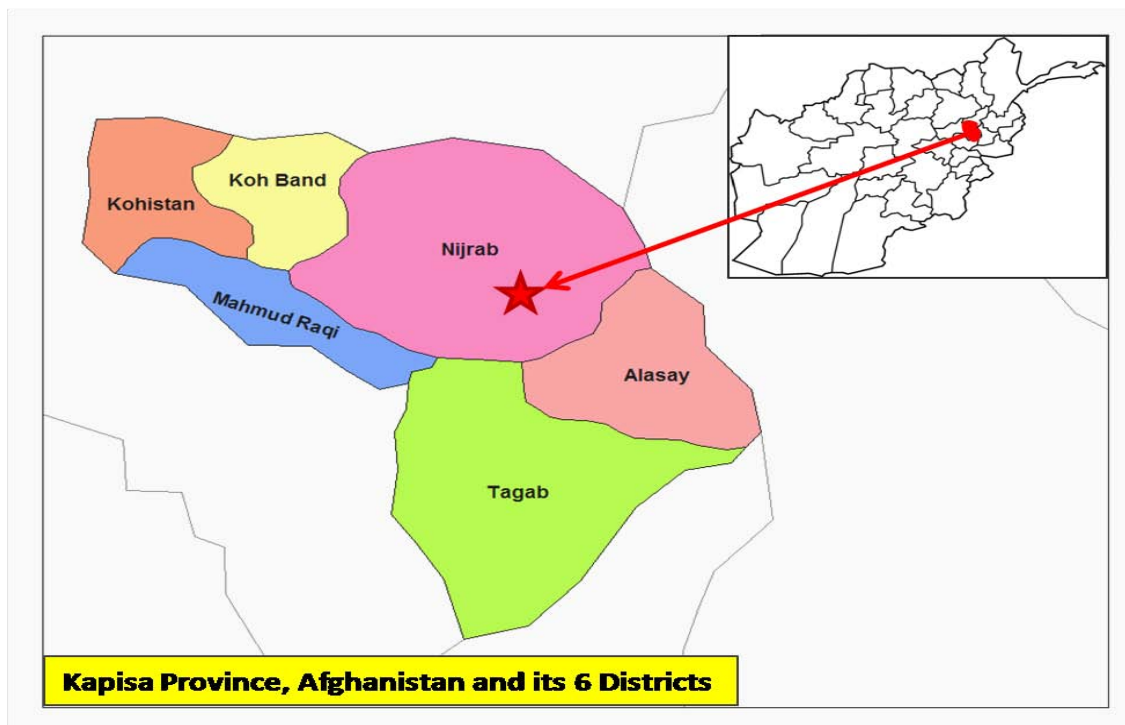


Figure 1: The Farukh Shah School is located in the mountainous Nijrab District of Kapisa Province shown by the red star. (Map provided by the Afghanistan Information Management System)

Contract Costs, Requirements, and Timing

The Kapisa PRT initially awarded a contract to a local Nijrab construction company as a firm fixed price contract for approximately \$150,000. The notice-to-proceed date was established as February 10, 2007 with a construction time period of 270 days.¹ Specific work tasks included site preparation, construction of a school building, a latrine, a guard house, generator housing, a hand operated water pump and well, and a stone masonry perimeter wall. Most of the work completed by the original contractor however, was deemed substandard by the then PRT Quality Assurance Representative as reflected in documentation provided to SIGAR. As this initial contractor was unable to accomplish required construction work to standard, a second contractor was awarded the project in February 2009. This contractor also proved to be unable to meet the standards required to complete the project within target cost levels and was terminated in May 2009. Finally, a third contractor was brought in to complete the remaining 20 percent of the construction work between June and July 2009. As a result of these performance issues and the inability of construction work to proceed during winter months, SIGAR found that the project's completion had been delayed by over two years. At the time of SIGAR's on-site inspections, the school building had been largely completed (see Site Photo 1), however, work continued on the perimeter wall and several peripheral structures.



Site Photo 1: View of school house taken in April 2009. (Photo provided by Kapisa PRT)

SIGAR Inspection Findings

SIGAR found that PRT officials issued a Project Closure Report on August 8, 2009, four days before SIGAR conducted its inspection. SIGAR believes this action was premature since significant work remained to be performed including work at the school building, latrine, guard house, generator building, walkways, water well and site clean-up. PRT officials explained that they approved the project for close-out due to higher command guidance that directed CERP projects approved in fiscal year 2008 be completed before

¹ The contract was awarded by the Provincial Project Review Committee which consists of both PRT and local Afghan authorities which meets regularly to discuss and jointly decide on project proposals that will be supported by the PRT.

the end of fiscal year 2009. PRT officials also explained that they were under pressure from the provincial Director of Education who stated he needed the school in its “as-is” condition because students and teachers were using an inadequate outdoor area for instruction.

SIGAR also found two significant design deficiencies involving the earth removal work performed on the construction site. The first deficiency involves inadequate site preparation and grading. This lack of adequate grading requires terracing to mitigate the effects of erosion as a result of the soil removal which cut into the side of a mountain and left ground layers exposed. The second design deficiency is the lack of a retaining wall. Because of the extensive leveling required for the site that cut into the side of a mountain, a retaining wall is needed instead of the simple stone masonry wall that serves as a security perimeter which lacks the structural strength to hold back mud and landslides.

Incomplete Work at Time of Project Close-out

School Building Construction

In June 2009, SIGAR found that the school’s construction did not meet accepted building standards as specified in the statement of work. For example, SIGAR found exposed electrical wiring, improper switch installations, wall joints filled with styrofoam sections rather than the required expansion joint material; improperly hung doors which were subject to jamming; improperly installed galvanized steel roofing and ventilation cantilevers, and the absence of required ceramic tiling on the school’s concrete floors.

During SIGAR’s follow-up on-site inspection in August, we found that some of the deficiencies noted in the previous onsite visit had been corrected. Some of the corrective actions were apparent such as the replacement of inadequately installed steel mesh fencing with appropriately fitted railings thus mitigating the risk of school children falling from a height of approximately 10 feet from the sides of the south entrance steps of the school building. However, SIGAR could not verify if all the corrective actions met required building standards. For example, although the exposed electrical wiring and switches in the main schoolhouse were replaced and appeared to be properly installed, because the generator was not working, SIGAR could not confirm that the electrical system in the school was in fact installed according to standards. SIGAR was also told by the PRT Quality Assurance Representative that the styrofoam that had been installed in the building joints had been replaced with appropriate expansion joint material. SIGAR noted other building inadequacies that included cracks along the sides of the soffit material below the roof overhang and a lack of mesh screening for the 4 ventilation openings in the roof. Without some sort of screening, birds and other pests will eventually enter in the space under the roof. SIGAR believes these and other deficiencies should have been addressed and corrected before the contract was closed out.

Latrine Construction

During our June inspection visit, SIGAR observed portions of the latrine concrete walls that were severely cracked and a defective roof that allowed wind and moisture to enter the structure that had to be removed. SIGAR also observed refuse removal openings in the rear base of the latrine structure that

were too small to adequately remove the human waste that will accumulate in these locations. During SIGAR's follow-up site visit in August, we found that although some improvements were made to the latrine building, including the installation of the new roof, other deficiencies, such as the inadequately sized openings for refuse removal, remained.



**Site photo 2: View of the latrine containing inadequate opening sizes for refuse removal.
(Photo provided by SIGAR)**

Guard House and Main Entrance Construction

Although the guard house was being used as intended, SIGAR noted that its construction was rudimentary. For instance, we noticed that no electric outlet or switch was installed in the building as specified in the statement of work during our inspection. Additionally, SIGAR observed that no outside security lights had been installed either at the guard house or the surrounding school grounds. During the inspection of this part of the security perimeter work, SIGAR found that the main entrance gates and guard entrance door were adequately constructed and in accordance with the statement of work.

Power Plant Building Construction and Installation of a 10 Kilowatt Generator

SIGAR found that the power plant building was adequately built following the replacement of the original roof that had to be removed due to defective construction methods we identified in June 2009. Additionally, during the August onsite visit the SIGAR inspection team had the opportunity to examine the 10 kilowatt generator. SIGAR found that the generator had not been permanently installed. No venting pipes or vent openings were installed, as required by the statement of work, to properly allow vent fumes produced during generator operations to escape the building. Additionally, the building lacked a concrete walkway and no fuel tank was installed at the time of SIGAR's June inspection. During the August onsite visit SIGAR noted that although some improvements were made, such as a newly installed roof, several items required by the statement of work had yet to be accomplished. These items include venting pipes for generator exhaust and concrete walkways leading to the school. During

SIGAR's second site visit, we also learned that no individual had been designated or trained to serve as the generator operator and electrician to handle power issues for the school.



Site Photo 3: View of generator house which lacks proper exhaust venting as required in the statement of work. (Photo provided by SIGAR)

Hand Pump Water Well Installation

During both the June and August onsite visits, SIGAR inspectors found the hand operated water pump to be inoperable. SIGAR could not determine whether the well was placed in a location that no longer had the capacity to bring water to the surface, or whether the internal mechanisms of the pump were at fault.



Site Photo 4: During the onsite visit to the school, SIGAR inspectors found that the water pump installed 3 months earlier was not operable. (Photo provided by SIGAR)

Site Cleanup

SIGAR noted that the school compound had not been adequately cleared of debris and rubbish left over from construction activities. Additionally, old student desks that were apparently not needed by the school administration were placed in two large piles on either end of the school. It is unclear when or if these materials will be removed.



Site photo 5: View of discarded old school desks outside of the main school building. (Photo provided by SIGAR).

Project Lacks Proper Grading and a Retaining Wall

SIGAR found two serious project design flaws. First, instead of properly grading the site and compacting the construction site's soil, the excavated material was placed in the lower portion of the school grounds. This area is subject to severe erosion which creates a potential threat to the integrity of the various buildings on the school grounds (see Site Photos 6 and 7).² SIGAR believes that the absence of adequate earthwork provisions in the contract's scope of work led to this condition. The only practical solution to this serious design problem is to conduct another topographic survey and develop an effective grading plan that will prevent erosion from undermining the foundations of the various structures on the site. SIGAR noted in discussions with PRT and school officials that there is interest in developing a plan that can best utilize the newly leveled land for other purposes such as a soccer pitch and play ground.

² The site the school compound was built on was far from ideal. Built on land owned by the Afghan Education Department, the project site is located on a 2.5 acre parcel of steeply sloping, rocky land.



Site Photo 6: View of grader attempting to level the ground in front of the school house in mid- July. This grading improved, but did not solve, the ground erosion problem because there was no follow-up compaction of the soil. (Photo provided by Kapisa PRT)



Site Photo 7: View of school grounds less than one month after grading work was completed showing signs of site erosion. (Photo provided by Kapisa PRT)

Second, SIGAR also found that although the perimeter wall appeared to be solidly built and in accordance with the statement of work, it mostly serves as a retaining wall due to the nature of the school grounds topography. SIGAR notes this is potentially dangerous since the perimeter wall was not built to retaining wall standards which require a much larger and stronger foundation base. Given the nature of the area's topography with evidence of recent rockslides and erosion, the possibility exists that areas of the perimeter wall may suffer washout and collapse unless it is further reinforced. (See Site Photos 7 and 8).



Site Photo 8: View of 2 meter high stone masonry perimeter wall at the rear of the school compound. The significant level of erosion can be seen. The perimeter wall parallel to the slope can be seen on the right. (Photo provided by SIGAR)



Site Photo 9: The top of the 2 meter perimeter wall can be seen (indicated by red arrow). During the site grading, soil was placed against the perimeter wall, bringing the grade elevation up to the top of the wall in some areas. (Photo provided by SIGAR)

Conclusions

SIGAR found that the Kapisa PRT issued a Project Closure Report in August 2009, despite the fact that several construction deficiencies in the PRT's final quality assurance inspection needed to be addressed for safety, quality, and sustainability reasons.

Major unfinished tasks that SIGAR noted included: (1) grading of the school grounds; (2) installing an external fuel tank and exhaust pipe outlet for the generator at the power plant building; (3) repairing and servicing the hand operated water pump; (4) constructing concrete walkways throughout the school grounds; (5) installing mesh screens or vents in the roof ventilation cantilever openings on the main school building to prevent entry of birds or other pests into the roof area; (6) cleaning up and removing site debris; and (7) designating and training an individual to serve as the generator operator and electrician to handle electrical power supply issues for the school.

Finally, SIGAR found two serious design flaws which should have been anticipated and addressed in the scope of work: an absence of terracing needed to mitigate the effects of soil erosion as a result of site preparation which cut into the side of a mountain, and a retaining wall rather than the simple stone masonry security wall that has been constructed.

Recommendations

SIGAR recommends that the Commander of the Kapisa PRT:

- Issue a follow-up contract to address the construction deficiencies noted in this report.
- Place greater emphasis on developing detailed scopes of work which anticipate and address critical design issues that are particular to each construction project rather than relying solely on standard design plans.

Agency Comments and Response

USFOR-A and the Kapisa PRT provided written comments on the draft of this report which are included in Appendix C. In their comments, USFOR-A and the Kapisa PRT generally concurred with the information and recommendations presented in the report. USFOR-A stated that although it believes the procedures for issuing a project closure report are sound, they are in need of enforcement. SIGAR agrees with this assessment and revised its recommendations because USFOR-A is drafting an order to address a number of the quality assurance issues SIGAR noted in this report. SIGAR believes that when issued, this guidance will provide better visibility of project status for managers and verify proper project closure. SIGAR acknowledges the need to be responsive with the desires of the local authorities but maintains that work should have continued in order to ensure the requirements specified in the statement of work were fully met.

While USFOR-A provided no comment on SIGAR's recommendation that a follow-up contract to address deficiencies noted in this report, the Kapisa PRT concurred with the recommendation. USFOR-A concurred that greater emphasis on developing detailed scopes of work which anticipate and address critical design issues should be a part of project development. In its response, USFOR-A stated that every "effort is made to provide a quality project to the Afghans. However, the reality of the situation is that CERP projects are prepared by soldiers not engineering firms." This comment highlights the need for proper training and effective preparation in order to set the conditions for successful project execution.

In its comments which concurred with the information in the draft report, the Kapisa PRT noted that tailoring standard school designs to the site location is crucial in identifying potential problems that could hinder the progress of projects. The PRT commented that "it is imperative that the PRT identifies problems prior to project execution, and these issues are addressed in a timely manner." SIGAR agrees.

(This report was conducted under the SIGAR Inspection Project Code SIGAR-002b-I)

Appendix A-Scope and Methodology

SIGAR performed this project inspection from June to August 2009 in accordance with Quality Standards for Inspections issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The inspection team included the Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and an engineer inspector.

In performing this project inspection, SIGAR:

- Reviewed contract documentation to include the following:
 - Contract KAP-NIJ-6348-3528 issued by the Bagram Joint Contracting Center on 10 February 2007; relevant purchase orders, invoices, and vouchers dealing with the project; the Statement of Work with all required specifications and accompanying documentation.
 - All documentation prepared and presented by the contractor dealing with the construction of the road project.
 - The project Survey and Assessment Plan including design drawings and specifications, PRT quality assurance reports and records, construction progress photographs and other documentation brought to the inspection team's attention.
- Interviewed the previous and current PRT Commanders and other knowledgeable members of the PRT staff; the contractor and chief work foreman who were present during the on-site visits to the school construction site made in both June and August 2009; and the Kapisa Provincial Director of Education.
- Conducted an onsite inspection of the school construction project during visits on June 20 and August 12, 2009. Personnel from the Kapisa PRT (including the previous and current PRT Engineer and members of their staff) accompanied SIGAR inspectors during these inspection visits.

Appendix B – Abbreviations

CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
USFOR-A	United States Forces-Afghanistan

Appendix C – Agency Comments



HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09356

USFOR-A DCDR-S

23 September 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 400 Army
Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: USFOR-A Response to Draft Report: Inspection of Farukh Shah School
Construction Project in Kapisa Province: Project Completion Approved Before All Contract
Requirements Met (SIGAR Inspection 09-03).

1. Reference Final – Draft Report SIGAR Inspection-09-03, Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction, subject same as above.
2. This memorandum formally responds to recommendations within the draft report.
3. Point of contact for this action is USFOR-A IG, Col Lawrence Brundidge, DSN: 318-237-
1678.

Encl

USFOR-A Response to Draft Report 09-03

JOHN A. MACDONALD

Major General, USA

Deputy Commander, Support

United States Forces- Afghanistan

[Note: When the draft of this report was sent for agency comment, it was tentatively designated as SIGAR Inspection 09-03. Since receiving agency comments, this report has been re-designated SIGAR Inspection 10-1 as it is being issued in FY 2010.]

SIGAR DRAFT – 09-03**“Inspection of Farukh Shah School Construction Project in Kapisa Province: Project Completion Approved Before All Construction Standards Met”****USFOR-A COMMENTS
TO THE DRAFT REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION 1: SIGAR recommends that the Commander of US Forces-Afghanistan and the Commander of the Kapisa PRT review procedures for issuing a Project Closure Report with the goal of ensuring that all contracted work is completed and built to standard prior to project close-out. (page 9 of SIGAR report)

USFOR-A RESPONSE: USFOR-A partially concurs with information provided in this SIGAR Report.

This process has been recently reviewed. We believe the procedure is sound, but in need of enforcement. We are currently in final staffing of a fragmentary order which will require the entire project file be scanned and attached to the CIDNE database, thus enabling managers to review files at any stage of a project. Proper project closure will be verified prior to funding a new project. However, no matter what the procedure, work completion will always be the jobsite QA inspector's judgment call.

KP PRT RESPONSE: Kapisa PRT concurs with information provided in this SIGAR Report. The third contractor was brought in to complete the many punchlist items that the second contractor could not finish. The scope of work was very limited due to the amount of money left on the contract. Once these items were finished a closure report was issued so that the ministry of education could begin to hold classes in the facility.

RECOMMENDATION 2: SIGAR recommends that the Commander of US Forces-Afghanistan and the Commander of the Kapisa PRT issue a follow-up contract to address the assorted construction deficiencies noted in this report. (page 9 of SIGAR report)

USFOR-A RESPONSE: USFOR-A did not visit this project site and therefore cannot provide comment on this recommendation.

KP PRT RESPONSE: Kapisa PRT partially concurs with information provided in this SIGAR Report. This could be an opportunity to mentor GIRoA and the Ministry of Education. The many deficiencies outlined need to be addressed and corrected through some means, executing a follow-on CERP project in conjunction with the director of education can be beneficial so the GIRoA quality assurance inspectors can learn to outline exactly what items must be accomplished to provide the best learning environment for the children of Farukh Shah Valley.

RECOMMENDATION 3: SIGAR recommends that the Commander of US Forces-Afghanistan and the Commander of the Kapisa PRT place greater emphasis on developing detailed scopes of work which anticipate and address critical design issues. (page 9 of SIGAR report)

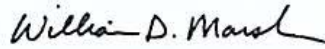
USFOR-A RESPONSE: USFOR-A concurs with information provided in this SIGAR Report.

Every effort is made to provide a quality project to the Afghans. However, the reality of the situation is that CERP projects are prepared by soldiers not engineering firms.

KP PRT RESPONSE: Kapisa PRT concurs with information provided in this SIGAR Report. Ensuring contractors are held to the standards set forth in the contracts from the inception of the project will create a better product in the end. Tailoring the ministries standard school designs to the site location are crucial in identifying potential problems that could hinder progression. It is imperative that the PRT identifies problems prior to project execution, and these issues are addressed in a timely manner. Contractors must be held to the performance periods set forth in the contract but at the same time it is the PRT's responsibility to ensure the contractor can be successful by not issuing Notice to Proceed, NTP, during the winter when many activities are unable to be executed.



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SIGAR Mission and Contact Information

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

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

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