The 25th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS) summarizes the quarter’s key events and oversight of the two complementary U.S. missions in Afghanistan: counterterrorism operations and building the capacity of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

**“Civil war is certainly a path that can be visualized if [Afghanistan] continues on the trajectory it’s on.”**

–General Austin Miller, Commander, USFOR-A

**President Biden Announces Complete Withdrawal by September 11, 2021**

- U.S. troops, contractors, and equipment began their final withdrawal in May.
- A small troop contingent will stay behind to guard the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.
- Additional special operations forces, heavy bombers, and an aircraft carrier group deployed to the region to provide cover for the withdrawal.
- The February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement stipulated for the removal of all military forces, non-diplomatic civilian personnel, private security contractors, and support personnel.

**U.S. Support to the ANDSF Transitions to “Over-the-Horizon” Model**

- Future financial support to the ANDSF will primarily consist of contracted aviation maintenance and training, supplies such as fuel and ammunition, and soldier salaries.
- Advisors will continue to work with Afghan partners via video and teleconference.
- DoD plans to conduct airstrikes against serious terrorist threats in Afghanistan but not the Taliban after withdrawal.

**Afghans Who Worked for the U.S. Wait for Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Approvals**

- Afghans who face ongoing, serious threats due to their work for the U.S. in Afghanistan may be eligible for SIVs.
- As of June, there was a backlog of 18,000 applications, some of which have been pending for years.
- A 2020 DoS OIG review found several problems with the program, including insufficient staffing and a lack of a central database.
- DoS said it was surging resources and attempting to streamline the process to reduce the backlog.
- After the quarter, DoS said eligible applicants would be relocated to the U.S. or third countries.

**Taliban Demonstrates Intransigence in Peace Talks**

- The Taliban refused to participate in a planned peace conference in Turkey, causing organizers to postpone the conference indefinitely.
- Ongoing peace talks in Doha, Qatar, produced no significant progress.
- Despite the halting progress of the talks, the Taliban nominally engaged in the peace process because it seeks legitimacy.

**Increased Taliban Violence Limits Access for Humanitarian Workers**

- Taliban violence specifically targeted female government, aid, and healthcare workers.
- Taliban blockades threatened to seize humanitarian cargo en route to target populations.
- USAID expects constraints on access for humanitarian workers to worsen as violence increases.

**Oversight and Investigations**

- A USAID OIG audit highlighted actions taken to prevent and respond to the sexual exploitation of beneficiaries.
- Lead IG investigations related to OFS resulted in 6 criminal charges and 2 convictions related to theft and fraud.