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(U) Audit of the Department of State and Embassy Kabul Planning for the Transition to a Civilian-Led Mission in Afghanistan

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United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

(U) This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

(U) This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

(U) It is my hope that this report will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations. I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. P. Brown', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Norman P. Brown
Acting Assistant Inspector General
for Audits

(U) Acronyms

(U) ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
(U) BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
(U) DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
(U) GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
(U) ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
(U) NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
(U) OPLAN	Operations Plan
(U) OIG	Office of Inspector General
(U) SBU	Sensitive but Unclassified
(U) SPA	Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement Between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
(U) USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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(U) Executive Summary

~~(SBU)~~ The U.S. mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to transition from a predominantly military-led to a civilian-led mission in December 2014. Concurrently with this transition, Afghanistan will begin its “transformational decade”¹ for which the international community has pledged its support for the development and growth of Afghanistan through 2024. In 2015, the United States efforts toward the transformational decade will become primarily the responsibility of the Department of State (Department) and Embassy Kabul. U.S. operations in Afghanistan have been primarily led by the Department of Defense while North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) combat operations have been underway. The Department’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit under the authority of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to assess the effectiveness of the Department and Embassy Kabul’s planning for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan. This is the first in a series of OIG reports on the Afghanistan transition. This report focuses on the effectiveness of the Department’s transition planning process. Subsequent reports will focus on the impact of transition on Department programs and operations in Afghanistan and on the effectiveness of the transition plan’s implementation.

~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Kabul has generally engaged in effective planning for the transition from a military-led to a civilian-led mission in Afghanistan by instituting a programmatic approach to the transition and incorporating lessons learned from the Iraq transition. To determine the effectiveness of Embassy Kabul’s transition planning, OIG used a National Performance Review report on best practices for downsizing in the Federal Government as a benchmark.² Embassy Kabul’s planning activities included the establishment of a transition organization, development of strategic and operational transition plans, determination and monitoring of transition tasks, and use of lessons learned from the Iraq transition. Such practices were consistent with the National Performance Review’s best practices. On November 20, 2013, the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a draft of the “Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement Between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,” (known as the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA)³), which identifies the status and role of U.S. military forces after the NATO combat mission ends December 31, 2014. Although the Ministry released the draft, the BSA remains unsigned and is subject to further negotiations and potential changes. The embassy’s transition planning assumes the BSA will be signed and authorize the U.S. military enough latitude to support U.S. civilian missions beyond 2014. Because the BSA remains

¹ (U) The “Transformation Decade” refers to the time period from 2015-2024. The International Community and Afghanistan declared themselves dedicated to a partnership following transition and the end of combat operations. The Transformation Decade includes mutual commitments in the areas of governance, security, the peace process, economic and social development, and regional cooperation.

² (U) In 1993, then Vice President Al Gore led a National Performance Review to improve efficiency in Government. In support of this initiative, the President’s Management Council, composed of high-ranking officials from major Federal entities, identified downsizing as a topic for consideration. As a result, an interagency team of eight Federal agencies conducted a benchmarking study and issued the National Performance Review, *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Downsizing*, Sept. 1997, <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/benchmark/downsize.html>>.

³ ~~(SBU)~~ On November 15, 2012, the United States and Afghanistan launched BSA negotiations, as agreed upon in the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement Between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

unsigned, the level to which the embassy can depend upon support from the military in post-2014 Afghanistan remains unknown. Without U.S. military support, embassy operations may need to be significantly curtailed at diplomatic platforms or the embassy will need to expend substantially greater resources in an effort to address an increased security risk.

(SBU) OIG determined that Embassy Kabul's transition planning was generally effective. However, key decisions cannot be timely made until the U.S. military presence post-2014 is clarified. Without timely key decisions, the embassy will potentially be unable to fully prepare for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan. Because further transition planning and implementation are contingent on BSA completion, OIG did not make recommendations in this report. However, OIG will continue to monitor the status of the BSA and its impact on Embassy Kabul's transition planning and implementation.

(SBU) OIG received comments from Embassy Kabul on November 2, 2013, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) on November 7, 2013. Both the embassy and DS agreed that BSA completion will determine the U.S. footprint in Afghanistan and stated that planning is based on the most current information available to allow for the greatest flexibility. Embassy Kabul's comments are reprinted in full in Appendix C. DS's comments are reprinted in full in Appendix D.

(U) Background

~~(SBU)~~ The U.S. mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to transition from a predominantly military-led to a civilian-led mission in December 2014. U.S. operations in Afghanistan have been primarily led by the Department of Defense while NATO combat operations have been underway. According to the embassy's Transformational Roadmap,⁴ the diplomatic presence in Afghanistan must transition from a "costly conglomeration of transitional diplomatic outposts in a heavily international military environment into a normalized diplomatic mission." However, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan must still be able to "perform necessary outreach, development assistance, project monitoring, reporting, and traditional diplomatic activities in the safest manner possible at a cost that is sustainable in an era of declining resources."⁵ Concurrently with this transition, Afghanistan will begin its transformational decade for which the international community has pledged its support for the development and growth of Afghanistan through 2024. In 2015, the United States efforts toward the transformational decade will become primarily the responsibility of the Department and Embassy Kabul.

(U) Transition and Support Agreements

(U) Agreements concerning the transition and the transformational decade were set forth in the following series of summits and conferences attended by the United States, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and other members of the international community.⁶

- **(U) Lisbon Summit – November 2010.** The United States, GIROA, and the international community agreed to begin a gradual transfer of Afghan security responsibilities from ISAF to GIROA with a complete transfer by the end of 2014.
- **(U) Bonn Conference – December 2011.** The United States, GIROA, and the international community agreed that the end of the security transition should be followed by a transformational decade with all participating members making firm commitments to support the growth efforts in Afghanistan through 2024.
- **(U) Chicago Summit – May 2012.** NATO announced in the Summit Declaration that by mid-2013, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) would take the security lead nationwide, accelerating the timetable for the complete transfer agreed to at the Lisbon Summit. In June 2013, ANSF took on that lead role and the primary mission of the United States and ISAF shifted from a combat role to training, advising, and assisting the ANSF.
- **(U) Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan – July 2012.** The United States and the international community reaffirmed their continuing support of Afghanistan during the transformational decade. In turn, Afghanistan worked with the Tokyo Conference participating members on structuring an economic framework intended to regionally

⁴ ~~(SBU)~~ The "U.S. Diplomatic Presence in Afghanistan Transformational Roadmap," dated July 29, 2013, "lays out Post's vision on how to move forward with the transformation of the diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in a practical and more cost-effective manner."

⁵ ~~(SBU)~~ Ibid.

⁶ (U) NATO maintains a public resource on the transition, available at <<http://natolibguides.info/transition/home>>.

integrate Afghanistan's economy and establish a fiscally self-sufficient, democratic state with sustainable economic strategies that are intended to gradually decrease its reliance on financial support from the international community.

(SBU) In May 2012, the United States and Afghanistan signed the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement Between the United States of America and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (SPA), which details how the future relationship between the two countries will evolve from a military footing to a normalized partnership with the completed drawdown of U.S. forces. The SPA intended to affirm the bond between the U.S. and Afghanistan with a commitment toward peace and security between the nations. In the SPA, the United States commits to support Afghanistan's social and economic development, long-term security, and regional integration. In turn, GIROA pledges a commitment to accountability, transparency, oversight, and the protection of the human rights of all Afghans. On November 20, 2013, the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a draft of the BSA, which identifies the status and role of U.S. military forces after the NATO combat mission ends December 31, 2014. Although the Ministry released the draft, the BSA remains unsigned and is subject to further negotiations and potential changes.

(U) Transition Offices

(U) To initiate the transition planning process, Embassy Kabul established two offices, the Management Transition Office (in June 2011) and the Transition Office (in September 2011). In May 2013, the two offices were consolidated into a single "Transition Office." According to embassy officials, the consolidated office would provide better internal and external coordination and support for mission-wide strategic transition planning. Prior to the consolidation, the Management Transition Office was responsible for the resource aspects of transition, such as logistics, personnel, and the establishment of enduring presence locations, and the Transition Office was responsible for coordinating with organizations external to the Department such as ISAF, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan,⁷ and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), among others. The consolidated Transition Office is now responsible for both policy and resource aspects of transition. Specifically, the Transition Office is responsible for developing and implementing transition plans to include post-2014 staffing determinations, establishing the geographic footprint of the embassy and enduring field locations, and producing policies and procedures for post-2014 field engagement to include monitoring of programs and activities. The Transition Office also monitors the transfer of any activities from ISAF to other entities so the embassy is aware of changes that could impact its future mission. The Transition Office reports directly to the ambassador and deputy chief of mission and is the main point of contact with agency and section leadership, the Department, ISAF, GIROA, and U.S. Forces – Afghanistan.

(U) The Transition Office director also leads the interagency Transition Task Force, which was established in February 2013 to facilitate embassy-wide communication and collaboration to ensure coordinated transition efforts that support U.S. policy and objectives. The Transition Task Force includes four subject matter teams: policy and missions,

⁷ (U) U.S. Forces-Afghanistan is the command and control headquarters for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan.

development, current and enduring field presence, and logistics. The Task Force resolves individual transition issues as they occur by assembling temporary working groups made up of at least one participant from each of the four subject matter areas. The temporary working groups, who report to the Transition Office director, are given a deadline and expected to produce a defined product to resolve the transition issue.

(U) Objective

(U) The audit objective was to assess the effectiveness of the Department and Embassy Kabul's planning for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan.

(U) This is the first in a series of OIG reports on the Afghanistan transition. This report focuses on the effectiveness of the Department's transition planning process. Subsequent reports will focus on the impact of transition on Department programs and operations in Afghanistan and on the effectiveness of the transition plan's implementation.

(U) Audit Results

~~(SBU)~~ Department Transition Planning is Effective but Contingent on Key Policy Decisions

~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Kabul has generally engaged in effective planning for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan by instituting a programmatic approach to the transition and by incorporating lessons learned from the Iraq transition. However, the timing of key decisions on the future U.S. military presence and an incomplete BSA could impact Embassy Kabul's ability to timely implement transition activities.

(U) Benchmarking Criteria

(U) To determine the effectiveness of Embassy Kabul's transition planning, OIG used a National Performance Review report on best practices for downsizing in the Federal Government as a benchmark. Although the National Performance Review focused on some aspects that did not pertain to the transition, such as involuntary separations that occur during a reduction in force, the following aspects were relevant:

- **(U) Involvement of Senior Leadership.** Senior leadership involvement is vital to effectively move towards the shared vision determined during strategic planning. Senior leadership should foster organizational commitment by imparting, on a strategic level, the necessity for change and the future direction of the organization.
- **(U) Involvement of Managers at All Levels.** Managers throughout the organization need to be held accountable for and committed to the change.
- **(U) Strategic Planning.** Strategic planning should create a shared vision of the future of an organization and involves reviewing the organization's mission, processes, and services. Such planning will assist in maintaining a consistent understanding of the organization's future and how it will get there.
- **(U) Monitoring and Evaluation.** Monitoring progress through periodic reviews is a chief component of success. Such monitoring allows the organization to learn from its successes and failures and to correct course when necessary.
- **(U) Lessons Learned.** Organizations should learn from other organizations that have gone through a similar change. Organizations should make sure that their processes are adequately documented so that lessons learned and best practices can be shared with other organizations.

(U) Effective Transition Planning

(U) Embassy Kabul has generally engaged in effective planning for the transition from a military-led to a civilian-led mission in Afghanistan by instituting a programmatic approach to the transition and by incorporating lessons learned from the Iraq transition. Embassy Kabul's

strategy to institute a programmatic approach and to incorporate lessons learned from the Iraq transition aligned with benchmarks outlined in the National Performance Review report. A summary of OIG's observations of Embassy Kabul's approach to transition planning and its alignment with the National Performance Review report is shown in Table 1.

~~(SBU)~~ Table 1. Summary of Embassy Planning Compared to Benchmarking Criteria

Involvement of Senior Leadership	Transition Organization • Reports directly to the ambassador and deputy chief of mission and was established more than 3 years prior to transition
Involvement of Managers at All Levels	Transition Organization • Coordinates and involves managers from all levels of the embassy including human resources, general services, and security • Participates in working groups to eliminate institutional stove-piping
Strategic Planning	Transition Plans • Transformational Roadmap – establishes the embassy's strategic vision for its mission beyond 2014 • Operational Plans – includes detailed planning for embassy functional areas that align with the strategic vision • Contingency Plans – established in response to planning amid uncertainty
Monitoring and Evaluation	Transition Tasks • Transition Office established and monitors over 1,500 tasks • Tasks are categorized by embassy functional area Monitoring and Evaluation • Monitoring of the transition tasks by Project Management Professional • Relies on feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts • Holds weekly reviews between the Project Management Professional and subject matter experts to review task status and plan accordingly
Lessons Learned	Lessons Learned • Embassy Kabul incorporated lessons learned from the Iraq transition into its planning, as previously reported by OIG,* such as • Embassy Baghdad had not incorporated a unified transition plan to anticipate the military's departure • Embassy Baghdad had not identified a single office or point of contact to direct transition efforts • Embassy Baghdad's lack of senior level involvement hampered transition efforts • Department was unable to decide and confirm land use agreements with the Government of Iraq

~~(SBU)~~ Source: OIG generated.

* (U) *Performance Evaluation of Embassy Baghdad's Transition Planning for a Reduced United States Military Presence in Iraq* (MERO-A-09-10, August 2009) and *Department of State Planning for the Transition to a Civilian-led Mission in Iraq* (MERO-I-11-08, May 2011).

(U) Programmatic Approach to Transition

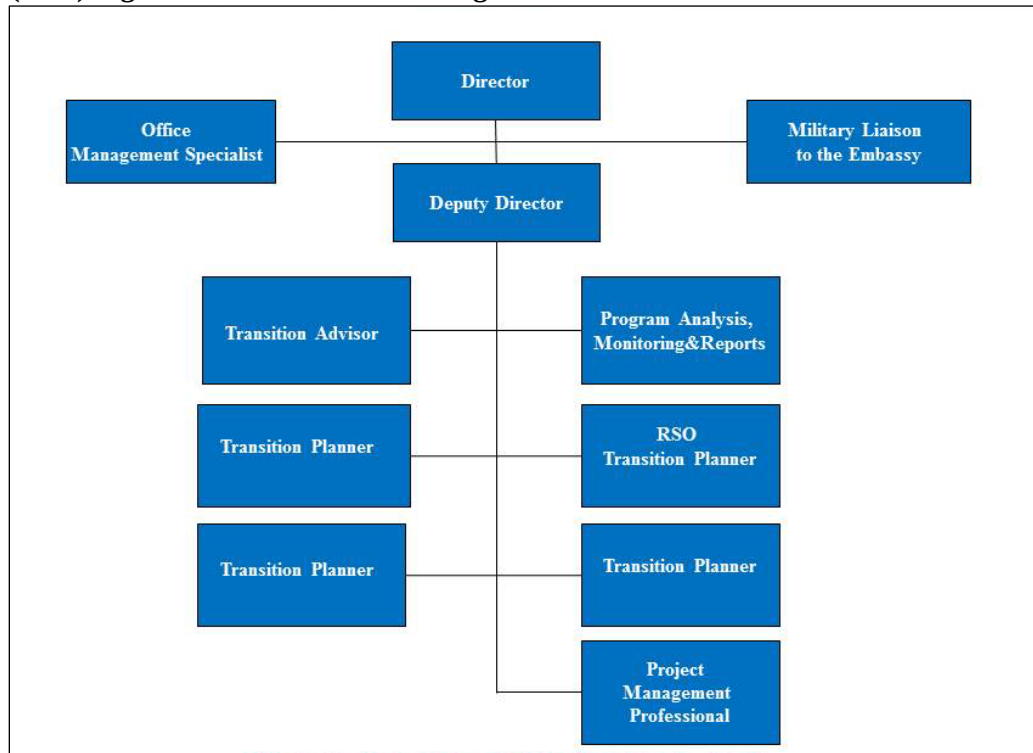
(U) Embassy Kabul planned and was managing the transition in accordance with key elements contained in the Department's Managing for Results: A Program and Project Management Guidebook (Guidebook), a reference tool meant to point Department program or project managers to applicable requirements, best practices, and supplement existing recommended project management methodologies contained in the *Foreign Affairs Manual* and *Foreign Affairs Handbook*. Specifically, Embassy Kabul established a transition organization, developed strategic and operational transition plans, established lines of communication with other transition stakeholders, implemented a monitoring and review process for transition tasks, and utilized expertise of a Project Management Professional⁸ and other subject matter experts.

(U) Transition Organization

~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Kabul established its first transition office in June 2011, more than 3 years before the transition was scheduled for completion in January 2015. The Guidebook states that establishing a project management office is critical to the success of project planning and execution. The National Performance Review report on best practices in downsizing suggests that managers from all levels, including senior management, should be included in the realignment or downsizing process. The Transition Office coordinates with managers from all levels throughout the mission, such as those responsible for human resources, general services, information technology, and security, and it reports directly to the ambassador and deputy chief of mission to ensure that senior leadership is involved with and informed of transition issues. The organizational structure of the Transition Office is shown in Figure 1.

⁸ (U) The Project Management Institute's Project Management Professional credential is an industry-recognized certification for project managers intended to demonstrate that individuals have the experience, education, and competency to lead and direct projects.

~~(SBU)~~ Figure 1. Transition Office Organizational Chart



~~(SBU)~~ Source: Embassy Kabul.

(U) The Guidebook states that one of the most critical elements in project management is a comprehensive communications plan that engages all stakeholders and ensures open lines of communication. Embassy transition planning officials participate in various working groups, which serve to stop or minimize institutional stove-piping. For example, the Interagency Operational Planning Team was chaired by the director of the Transition Office and an ISAF senior military official to coordinate the transfers of ISAF civil-military tasks to GIROA and other agencies, including the Department. The involvement of the Transition Office in this process helped to ensure that the Department was aware of tasks that could potentially be transferred to the embassy as the military draws down and enabled the Department to plan accordingly.

(U) Transition Plans

~~(SBU)~~ The Transition Office established the embassy's strategic vision of its anticipated post-2014 diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in the Transformational Roadmap (Roadmap) issued in July 2013. The Roadmap evolved from the U.S. Enduring Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014 Concept of Operations, Version 2, that was issued on July 4, 2012. The Concept of Operations strategy, which was based on the SPA and the anticipated outcomes from the BSA, was the embassy's official transition planning document until superseded by the Roadmap. The Roadmap is a planning document that lays out the post-2014 strategic vision of the U.S. mission. Because the BSA remains unsigned, U.S. and the NATO military enduring presence, the embassy had to make certain assumptions in the Roadmap. For example, the Roadmap assumes

that the BSA will contain a robust set of authorities for the U.S. military to operate in Afghanistan with enough autonomy to support U.S. civilian missions. The Roadmap states that a critical component of the U.S. enduring presence in Afghanistan will be a strong U.S. civilian presence in Kabul and the regional centers throughout the country. [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] The Roadmap assumes the post-2014 security situation at the consulates and diplomatic platforms will remain at current levels, and the strategic visions of the United States and Afghanistan will mesh and result in the signing of the BSA. The Roadmap is also based on the assumption that, once the BSA is signed, the U.S. military will continue to have an adequate enough post-2014 presence to support and safeguard the U.S. civilian mission. [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] Using the Roadmap to establish the embassy's strategic vision of its anticipated post-2014 diplomatic presence in Afghanistan and as a planning document aligns with the National Performance Review on best practices for downsizing, which states that plans should align to an organization's strategic direction.

(SBU) To compensate for the uncertainty of planning based on assumptions, the embassy has developed contingency plans, separate from the Roadmap, based on various scenarios. OIG reviewed contingency staffing plans for the embassy in Kabul, which are based on three scenarios of assumed military support, including a scenario where there is no residual U.S. or NATO military presence in Afghanistan. According to the embassy transition director, contingency plans have also been developed that outline options other than what is included in the Roadmap for locations outside of Kabul. OIG was not granted access to those contingency plans. Therefore, OIG is not able to comment on the extent of documented contingency plans for areas outside of Kabul. However, during the audit, the Transition Director discussed some of the various options with OIG, [Redacted] (b) (5)

(SBU) The embassy has also issued 14 operation plans (OPLAN), which document the detailed planning necessary to execute the Roadmap's strategic vision. The OPLANs were originally developed by the Management Transition Office with input from embassy subject matter experts. The OPLANs document the detailed planning necessary for transition, such as establishing tasks and timeframes, and addressing any obstacles, threats, or limitations that might be encountered. In addition, the OPLANs are used to explain the functional area reporting mechanisms, staffing and funding requirements and the interaction and coordination efforts with other transition stakeholders. OPLANs have been issued for the following functional areas: Embassy Air, Facilities, Field Support Unit, General Services Office, Human Resources Office, Information Resource Management Office, Legal, Medical, and Regional Security Office. The OPLANs can also include information relative to each individual office's approach to the transition and several OPLANs include issues encountered during the Iraq transition that could be used to aid transition planning in Afghanistan. For example, to address the excessive amount of military property and equipment the Department acquired in Iraq, the OPLAN for the

⁹ (U) A diplomatic platform refers to an official U.S. diplomatic facility that is neither an embassy nor a consulate.

Embassy Kabul General Services Office includes policies and procedures for vetting excess military property to ensure that there is a legitimate need for the property and that the embassy has the ability and resources to maintain the property. The OPLANs align with the National Performance Review on best practices for downsizing, which states that each department within the organization should develop plans to show how the downsizing or realignment will be implemented.

(U) Transition Tasks

~~(SBU)~~ The Transition Office has established over 1,500 tasks related to transition. It monitors those tasks through 11 databases categorized by embassy functional area, such as General Services Office, Regional Security Office, and Human Resources Office. Each database contains transition tasks related to its functional area. The transition tasks have milestone dates for task completion, and each task is assigned a status—late, at-risk, complete, in-progress, up-coming, or not yet started.¹⁰ The tasks are tracked and monitored by the Transition Office's Project Management Professional on a Gantt chart,¹¹ which can be viewed by transition planners concurrently in Kabul and in Washington.¹² The Gantt chart is used as a schedule management tool to review the status of transition activity on a weekly basis at program management review meetings that take place between a Transition Office official and the functional area managers. In addition to the tasks under the Transition Office in Kabul, the Gantt chart tracks transition tasks for the Transition Program Office in Washington. Data from the chart is also used to produce high-level consolidated status reports of embassy transition efforts, which serve as the focal point for monthly status meetings with the transition stakeholders in Kabul and Washington. This type of planning aligns to the Guidebook, which describes a project management process that includes developing detailed project plans and other project management documentation, such as schedules and risk management plans, to implement and execute project goals.

(U) Monitoring and Evaluation

~~(SBU)~~ To monitor over 1,500 tasks, the Transition Office has implemented a monitoring and evaluation process that relies on feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts from across the mission. This process allows the Transition Office to identify additional tasks, appropriate milestones, and decision points. For example, during the weekly program management reviews between the Transition Office and functional area managers who are subject matter experts, tasks are reviewed and, if necessary, the Project Management Professional will update task status on the Gantt chart, create additional tasks, or plan other mitigating actions based on feedback from the subject matter experts. This aligns to the Guidebook, which states that performance management should consist of a systematic process of monitoring program activities where managers execute their plans while providing monitoring

¹⁰ (U) Additional details on the validation of transition tasks are shown in Appendix B.

¹¹ (U) A Gantt chart is a schedule management tool used to compare baseline dates, forecasted dates, and actual progress to date for various activities.

¹² (U) The Executive Office for the Bureau Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs formed the Transition Program Office to facilitate transition planning and coordination between other entities within the Department, Embassy Kabul, the Department of Defense, and the intelligence community.

and reporting of project activities, including conducting reviews and developing corrective actions to ensure projects are staying within stated timeframes. In addition, the Transition Office's monitoring and evaluation process aligns with the National Performance Review on best practices in downsizing, which states that monitoring through periodic in-process reviews is a chief component of successful downsizing.

~~(SBU)~~ To ensure that the Transition Office was properly recording the task status (late, at-risk, complete, in-progress, or up-coming), OIG selected a sample of tasks and validated the status of each task. Specifically, OIG took a statistical sample of 116 tasks, which included all 20 tasks with a "late" status.¹³ OIG was able to validate that the task status was correctly recorded for all 116 tasks included in our sample. Of the 20 late tasks, 15 were attributed to embassy transition planners still awaiting decisions from the White House national security staff. Four of the remaining five late tasks sampled by OIG had been completed at the time OIG validated the data, and the final late task resulted from construction delays at a water treatment facility. According to embassy officials, the late task resulting from the construction delay at the water treatment facility will be completed as soon as the contractor receives the construction equipment to finish the work, which had been ordered at the time OIG validated the data.

~~(SBU)~~ The Transition Office is also involved with monitoring staffing levels and the overall mission rightsizing effort. For example, to monitor overall staffing levels, an official from the Transition Office sits on the embassy's Mission Extension and Relocation Committee¹⁴ to ensure that embassy staffing levels are moving in the direction of the projected post-2014 enduring presence levels. In addition, the Transition Office conducts continuous planning by requiring embassy sections and agencies to periodically revalidate their staffing plans and assumptions that could be affected by military drawdown, uncertain funding, and the changing security situation in Afghanistan. Monitoring staffing levels during a rightsizing process aligns with the National Performance Review on best practices for downsizing, which states that tracking workforce adjustments is a key practice in successful downsizing.

(U) Project Management Professional and Subject Matter Experts

~~(SBU)~~ The Transition Office employs the expertise of a Project Management Professional and several subject matter experts to lead in the development and monitoring of the transition tasks. The subject matter experts are comprised of individuals who manage the following functional areas of the embassy: Embassy Air, Facilities, Financial Management Office, Field Support Unit, General Services Office, Human Resources Office, Information Resource Management Office, Legal, Medical, Office of Continuity, and Regional Security Office.¹⁵ The subject matter experts, along with the Project Management Professional and other

¹³ (U) Detailed sampling methodology and results are presented in Appendix B.

¹⁴ (U) The Mission Extension and Relocation Committee is composed of representatives from the Transition Office, Interagency Provincial Affairs, USAID, Management, Regional Security Office, and Agriculture. This committee reviews each staffing extension or repositioning request and determines whether the position and extension is required to meet essential mission strategic goals.

¹⁵ (U) The Office of Continuity's mission is to "assist the embassy in maintaining a collaborative, continuous, and enduring information environment in support of the dynamic transition in Afghanistan" so that the information can be maintained for posterity.

transition officials, develop and update the OPLANs, which contain the planning details necessary to establish the enduring diplomatic presence. Of the 11 embassy functional areas, 9 have an OPLAN, which was used to develop the Gantt chart. The Project Management Professional is responsible for monitoring and updating the tasks on the Gantt chart. The chart is updated during weekly program management review meetings between the Project Management Professional and subject matter experts responsible for task completion. Utilizing a Project Management Professional aligns with the guidebook, which supports personnel with such certifications to implement globally recognized standards in project management. In addition, utilizing functional area managers who are subject matter experts from across the mission aligns with the National Performance Review on best practices in downsizing, which states that holding managers throughout the organization accountable is a necessary component to successful downsizing.

(U) Incorporation of Lessons Learned from the Iraq Transition

~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Kabul transition planning has effectively incorporated lessons learned from the transition to a reduced military presence in Iraq. During the Iraq transition, OIG reported¹⁶ that Embassy Baghdad had not formulated a unified transition plan to anticipate the military's departure and that there was no single office or point of contact to direct these efforts. As stated above, Embassy Kabul has established a transition organization, which includes an office that acts as a single point of contact for transition issues and implements both strategic and operational transition plans. In Iraq, OIG reported that the lack of timely decisions on key issues, which stemmed from a lack of senior level participation in the process, hampered the transition effort. In Afghanistan, to ensure senior level participation in the transition process, the Transition Office reports directly to the ambassador and deputy chief of mission. Another challenge that OIG reported regarding the Iraq transition was the Department's inability to decide and confirm land use agreements with the Government of Iraq. Conversely, Embassy Kabul has identified several land use agreements with GIROA that could be used for an enduring diplomatic presence once key decisions are made concerning residual military levels and once the BSA is completed. Incorporating lessons learned from other organizations that have experienced a similar change is a critical component of Federal Government downsizing best practices. In addition, organizations should make sure that their processes are adequately documented so they can be shared with other organizations; Embassy Kabul is ensuring that its transition processes are adequately documented through its Office of Continuity.

~~(SBU)~~ Lack of Key Decisions and BSA Impact

~~(SBU)~~ Although Embassy Kabul has generally engaged in effective planning, key decisions concerning the post-2014 U.S. military presence and an incomplete BSA may impact Embassy Kabul's ability to timely implement transition activities. In July 2013, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the President was still reviewing options from his national security staff and had

¹⁶ (U) *Performance Evaluation of Embassy Baghdad's Transition Planning for a Reduced United States Military Presence in Iraq* (MERO-A-09-10, August 2009) and *Department of State Planning for the Transition to a Civilian-led Mission in Iraq* (MERO-I-11-08, May 2011).

not made a decision about the size of a U.S. military presence after 2014. In addition, the BSA, which will determine the status and role of U.S. military forces after the NATO combat mission ends December 31, 2014, remains unsigned. An unsigned BSA could potentially lead to a complete military withdrawal from Afghanistan, as was the case in Iraq where the inability of the U.S. and the Government of Iraq to agree on the status of U.S. forces led to the complete withdrawal of U.S. military personnel. According to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, without an agreement that serves both U.S. and Afghan interests, there cannot be a residual U.S. military presence in Afghanistan after 2014. Because of this uncertainty, embassy officials are unable to move forward with several transition tasks, including tasks related to preparing critical security assets for diplomatic locations outside of Kabul, which may result in embassy operations being significantly curtailed at diplomatic platforms. If embassy operations are not curtailed, the embassy will need to expend substantially greater resources in an effort to address an increased security risk.

(SBU) Because of the lack of key decisions, the embassy must plan for transition based on varying assumptions, which could affect its ability to prepare fully and to plan accordingly. For example, the Roadmap assumes that the BSA will contain a robust set of authorities for the U.S. military to operate in Afghanistan with enough latitude to support U.S. civilian missions,

[Redacted] (b) (5)

As of November 20, 2013, the embassy co-locates with the military at four of its five field locations and relies on the military for critical support requirements, [Redacted] (b) (5)

In addition, the Roadmap assumes that Embassy Air will continue to operate with access to civilian and military airfields under Afghan airspace access agreements. Even with contingency plans based on various scenarios of military support, including a scenario with no military support, it will still take the military time to initiate their plans, which affects the embassy's ability to prepare and to plan accordingly. Without troop numbers and decisions on diplomatic locations outside of Kabul, the embassy may be unable to fully prepare in the field, which could affect its ability to conduct the diplomatic mission in those areas. As a result, much of the embassy's transition planning is based on assumptions that may or may not occur.

(SBU) Embassy Kabul relies on the military for critical support, and with the BSA outcome unknown and the residual U.S. or NATO troop levels still undecided, the level to which the embassy will be able to leverage support from the military in post-2014 Afghanistan remains unknown. Consequently, much of the post-2014 programs and operations are highly dependent on the still unsigned BSA, which according to Embassy officials, affects their ability to staff properly. OIG recently reported that the U.S. Mission Iraq staffing process was made without full consideration of U.S. foreign policy priorities which resulted in Embassy Baghdad not knowing whether it had the proper number or skill mix of personnel needed to meet mission priorities while minimizing security risk and optimizing costs.¹⁷ The Foreign Service staffing process optimally requires U.S. missions to make staffing decisions one year in advance, which means Embassy Kabul had to establish much of its summer 2014 Foreign Service positions in

¹⁷ (U) Audit of the U.S. Mission Iraq Staffing Process (AUD-MERO-13-33, August 2013).

mid-2013 based not on actual post-2014 programs and operations but based on its own assumptions and resulting transition plans. Specifically, the embassy assumed that the U.S. Mission in Afghanistan will become more “traditional” over the next few years, [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] As a result, the embassy currently is unable to determine with precision whether it will have the proper number or skill mix of personnel needed to meet mission priorities at all locations as transition is completed by the end of 2014.

(U) Conclusion

(SBU) OIG determined that Embassy Kabul’s transition planning was generally effective because it instituted a programmatic approach to the transition and incorporated lessons learned from the Iraq transition. However, timely key decisions regarding the enduring U.S. military presence and a signed BSA are needed to determine the extent of the post-2014 U.S. Mission Afghanistan programs and operations and allow the Embassy Kabul to plan accordingly. Without timely key decisions, the embassy will potentially be unable to fully prepare for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan, and may need to expend substantially greater resources in an effort to address an increased security risk. Because further transition planning and implementation is contingent on BSA completion, OIG is not making recommendations in this report. However, OIG will continue to monitor BSA completion status and its impact on Embassy Kabul’s transition planning and implementation.

(U) Department Responses to the Finding

(SBU) OIG received responses to the draft report from Embassy Kabul on November 2, 2013, and DS on November 7, 2013. Both the embassy and DS agreed that BSA completion will determine the U.S. footprint in Afghanistan and reiterated that transition planning is based on the most current information available to allow for the greatest flexibility. DS also stated that the report example concerning [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] and therefore should not be used in the report. Embassy Kabul’s comments are reprinted in full in Appendix C. DS’s comments are reprinted in full in Appendix D.

(U) OIG Reply

(SBU) OIG met with embassy and DS officials to obtain additional information concerning the [Redacted] (b) (5) and determined that the example was no longer relevant because of recent decisions concerning [Redacted] (b) (5). Therefore, OIG removed that example from the report.

(U) Scope and Methodology

(U) The Department of State (Department), Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated this audit under the authority of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to assess the effectiveness of the Department and Embassy Kabul's planning for the transition from a military-led to civilian-led mission in Afghanistan. This is the first in a series of OIG reports on the Afghanistan transition. This report focuses on the effectiveness of the Department's transition planning process. Subsequent reports will focus on the impact of transition on Department programs and operations in Afghanistan and on the effectiveness of the transition plan's implementation. OIG conducted this audit from December 2012 to October 2013 in Afghanistan and Washington, DC metropolitan area. This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require that OIG plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. OIG believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objective.

(U) To accomplish the audit objective, OIG reviewed various international agreements regarding the transition to a civilian-led mission in Afghanistan including Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which affirmed the bond between the two nations and explains how the U.S. will continue its commitment to support Afghanistan in the future. Other agreements reviewed included declarations from the Lisbon Summit, the Bonn Conference, the Chicago Summit, and the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, which discusses the security transition to the Afghan government and the international community's continuing support for Afghanistan through 2024.

~~(SBU)~~ To evaluate the effectiveness of transition planning, OIG reviewed Embassy Kabul's strategic transition planning document: the Transformational Roadmap dated July 29, 2013, and its predecessor the U.S. Enduring Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014 Concept of Operations,¹ which lays out the Embassy's plan to move forward with transformation of the diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. OIG also reviewed embassy-level operational planning documents (OPLAN) which provide details for implementing the Roadmap. OIG compared tasks outlined in the OPLANs to tasks established and tracked by the Transition Office. In addition, OIG reviewed and verified the reasonableness of the status of individual tasks established and monitored by the Transition Office (see Use of Computer-Processed Data). To evaluate the Embassy's overall transition planning process, OIG applied guidance including Best Practices in Downsizing² and A Program and Project Management Guidebook.³

(U) To ensure inclusive coordination, OIG met with the various offices involved with or affected by transition including officials at various sites in Afghanistan as well as Washington

¹ ~~(SBU)~~ U.S. Enduring Presence in Afghanistan Post-2014 Concept of Operations, ver. 2, July 4, 2012.

² (U) Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Downsizing, National Performance Review, Sept. 1997.

³ (U) Managing for Results: A Program and Project Management Guidebook, Department of State, June 2012.

DC. In addition to the deputy chief of mission at the embassy, OIG met with officials from the offices identified in Table 1. OIG also collected documentation on transition planning including emails, staffing projections, and contingency plans.

(U) Table 1. Offices Contacted by the Office of Inspector General

Embassy Kabul	Afghanistan Regional Platforms
Embassy Air	North (Mazar-e Sharif)
Embassy Legal Advisor	South (Kandahar)
Executive Office	East (Bagram)
Field Support Unit	Southwest (Helmand)
General Services Office	West/Consulate Herat (Herat)
Human Resources Office	Military in Afghanistan
Information Management Office	International Security Forces Afghanistan (Kabul)
Interagency Provincial Affairs	U.S. Forces Afghanistan (Kabul)
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs	Washington, DC
Management Transition Office	Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
Health Unit	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
Office of Continuity	Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
Overseas Buildings Operations	Office of the Under Secretary for Management
Regional Security Office	
Transition Office	

(U) Source: OIG generated.

(U) Work Related to Internal Controls

~~(SBU)~~ OIG performed steps to assess the adequacy of internal controls related to transition planning. Specifically, OIG interviewed personnel responsible for transition planning at Embassy Kabul, the five Regional Platforms, Washington, DC, and International Security Forces Afghanistan to ensure planning was coordinated. OIG also reviewed the Transition Office's monitoring and evaluation process including sampling the transition task database to validate the status of tasks (see Appendix B). On a weekly basis, Transition Office officials conducted performance reviews with each of the 11 functional area⁴ subject matter experts where the Transition Office's Project Management Professional received task status input from the subject matter experts. During these reviews, the Project Management Professional updates the database, to include adjusting task milestones and task status to reflect conditions on the ground as reported by the subject matter experts. OIG evaluated several of these performance reviews as

⁴ ~~(SBU)~~ Functional area offices include Embassy Air, Facilities, Field Support Unit, Financial Management Office, General Services Office, Human Resources Office, Information Resource Management Office, Legal, Medical, Office of Continuity, and Regional Security Office.

well as the Transition Office change log, where Transition Office officials document any changes made to the database.

(U) Use of Computer-Processed Data

(U) OIG used computer-processed data provided by the Transition Office including screenshots of various databases used to monitor transition tasks. To assess the reliability of computer-processed data, OIG tested, via sampling, whether the task status was correct for a sample of tasks. See Appendix B for detailed sampling methodology and results. OIG also conducted interviews with officials knowledgeable about the data and collected documentation to support the data provided. OIG believes the data was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. Therefore, OIG believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings based on the audit objectives.

(U) OIG's testing was limited to the accuracy of the information (i.e., "task status") reported in the Transition Office's databases. OIG did not test the task database for completeness and was therefore not able to determine whether the tasks identified by the Transition Office encompass all tasks necessary or whether the tasks identified are the appropriate tasks.

(U) Validation of Transition Task Status

(SBU) The Transition Office maintains 11 functional area databases, which together contain over 1,500 transition tasks. The databases can be viewed in the form of a Gantt chart, which is a schedule management tool used to compare baseline dates, forecasted dates, and actual progress to date for various activities or tasks. According to Transition Office officials, tasks may be assigned hundreds of attributes, or fields. Some of the most commonly used fields are Task ID number, Unique ID, Indicator, Project Manager Status (PM Status), Percent Complete (% Complete), Critical, Name, Start Date, Finish Date, Duration, Predecessor, Successor, Constraint Type, Constraint Date, Task Type, Actual Start, Actual Finish, Baseline Start, Baseline Finish, Decision Point, and Categories.

(SBU) Each task is assigned one of six status categories: late, at-risk, in-progress, complete, up-coming, or not yet started in the database under the column heading “PM Status,” which is presented as a colored circle. The categories are color-coded and defined according to the task status, as shown in Figure 1.

(SBU) **Figure 1. Task Status Categories and Definitions**

Category	PM Status	Definition
Late		A task where the current date is past the assigned finish date
At-Risk		A task that should have already started or is at risk of becoming "late" because the current date is close to the assigned finish date
In-Progress		A task that has started and is not defined as “late” or “at-risk”
Complete		A task that has been considered complete
Up-coming		A task where the current date is within 30 days of the assigned start date
Not Yet Started		A task that has not begun where the current date is more than 30 days from the assigned start date

(SBU) Source: OIG generated based on information provided by the Transition Office

(SBU) On April 24, 2013, OIG was provided screenshots¹ from the 11 functional area databases. Information in the screenshots included: Task ID Number, PM Status, % Complete,

¹ (SBU) OIG requested access to the databases but was denied because the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs determined the databases were “internal working document[s].” As an alternative, OIG was provided screenshots of the data and manually counted and verified the data, working with the Transition Office at Embassy Kabul for updated data as necessary.

Name, Start Date, Finish Date, and Duration. OIG did not rely on the data as provided but performed tests and found that the data was reliable. [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] (b) (5)

(U) Detailed Sampling Methodology

(U) OIG's sampling objective was to test the reasonableness of the task status categories that the Transition Office assigned to transition tasks (late, at risk, in-progress, upcoming, or complete) contained in the databases by obtaining documentation or other support for the statuses of the tasks.

(U) Identification of the Universe of Transition Tasks

~~(SBU)~~ After obtaining screenshots of the Transition Office's 11 databases, OIG physically counted and recorded the number of transition tasks by functional area and task status category. The total universe (or population) of 1,554 transition tasks by functional area and task status category are listed in Table 1.

~~(SBU)~~ Table 1. Universe of Transition Tasks by Functional Areas and Categories

Functional Database	Late	At Risk	In Progress	Upcoming	Complete	Not Yet Started	Total Tasks
Embassy Air	4	0	16	3	77	33	133
Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	79	79
Financial Management Office	0	0	0	0	6	8	14
Field Support Unit	0	0	14	10	216	123	363
General Services Office	4	0	17	1	71	35	128
Human Resources Office	0	1	11	1	39	28	80
Information Resources Management	0	0	15	1	43	133	192
Legal	5	0	28	2	100	78	213
Medical – Health Unit	0	0	33	0	28	36	97
Office of Continuity	0	0	3	1	11	5	20
Regional Security Office	7	0	44	2	61	121	235
Totals	20	1	181	21	652	679	1554

~~(SBU)~~ Source: OIG generated based on data provided by the Transition Office.**(U) Formation of Revised Universe of Transition Tasks into Strata**

~~(SBU)~~ OIG could not test the reasonableness of tasks identified as “not yet started.” Consequently, those tasks were eliminated from the universe. Next, OIG formed strata or groups of tasks primarily to ensure adequate coverage of the most significant tasks. Specifically, OIG combined tasks identified in the database as “at risk,” “in-progress,” and “upcoming” into a single stratum and referred to it as “combined and started” tasks. The task status category “late” was not combined because of the implications of a task being considered late and of the category only containing 20 tasks. Likewise, tasks identified as “complete” were also not combined because of the ramifications of erroneously categorizing tasks as “complete” (for example, no longer subject to monitoring). A stratified revised universe was therefore formed containing 875 transition tasks. Related details are provided in Table 2.

~~(SBU)~~ Table 2. Revised Universe of Transition Tasks by Functional Areas and Categories

Functional Database	Late Universe	Combined and Started Universe	Completed Universe	Total Tasks
Embassy Air	4	19	77	100
Facilities	0	0	0	0
Financial Management Office	0	0	6	6
Field Support Unit	0	24	216	240
General Services Office	4	18	71	93
Human Resources Office	0	13	39	52
Information Resources Management	0	16	43	59
Legal	5	30	100	135
Medical – Health Unit	0	33	28	61
Office of Continuity	0	4	11	15
Regional Security Office	7	46	61	114
Totals	20	203	652	875

~~(SBU)~~ Source: OIG generated based on data provided by the Transition Office.

(U) Selection of Task Samples

~~(SBU)~~ OIG tested, via statistical sampling, the reasonableness of the status categories assigned to the transition tasks. The specific statistical method chosen was stratified random sampling—a technique that entails separating the population elements into non-overlapping groups, called strata, and then randomly sampling from each stratum. As previously indicated, OIG separated the tasks into three strata according to task status. The first stratum included all tasks with a status of “late,” and OIG tested all 20 of the tasks in this category because of the implications of a task being considered late and because of the small size of the stratum. The next stratum was an amalgam of three categories already started but not completed, namely “at risk,” “in-progress,” and “upcoming,” referred to as “combined and started.” The last stratum contained tasks identified as “complete.” The last two strata, “combined and started” and “complete,” were both sampled at a rate of approximately 10 percent per functional area within each status category, thereby yielding samples of 25 and 71, respectively. In total, OIG therefore sampled and tested 116 transition tasks out of the universe of 875 tasks. Details of the sampling by functional areas and categories are shown in Table 3.

~~(SBU)~~ Table 3. Sample of Transition Tasks by Functional Areas and Categories

Functional Database	Late Universe	Late Sample	Combined and Started Universe	Combined and Started Sample	Completed Universe	Completed Sample
Embassy Air	4	4	19	2	77	8
Facilities	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A
Financial Management Office	0	N/A	0	N/A	6	1
Field Support Unit	0	N/A	24	3	216	22
General Services Office	4	4	18	2	71	8
Human Resources Office	0	N/A	13	2	39	4
Information Resources Management	0	N/A	16	2	43	5
Legal	5	5	30	4	100	11
Medical – Health Unit	0	N/A	33	4	28	3
Office of Continuity	0	N/A	4	1	11	2
Regional Security Office	7	7	46	5	61	7
Totals	20	20	203	25	652	71

~~(SBU)~~ Source: OIG generated based on data provided by the Transition Office.

(U) Testing Results

~~(SBU)~~ OIG statistically sampled a total of 116 transition tasks to test the reasonableness of the task status categories (late, at risk, in-progress, upcoming, or complete) assigned by the Transition Office and found they were all adequately supported. Consequently, OIG is 95 percent confident that the anomaly rate is between 0.00 percent and 2.96 percent when projected to the universe of 875 transition tasks.

~~(SBU)~~ OIG met with the subject matter experts and transition officials in order to verify the status of each task, obtaining documentation, such as cables, contract documents, and memorandums, to support the status of 83 of the 116 sampled tasks. For 32 of the remaining 33 tasks, OIG obtained other acceptable evidence. For the last task, OIG physically observed an item that was purchased that supported the task status of “complete.”

~~(SBU)~~ OIG found that 15 of 20 (75 percent) “late” tasks were identified as late because the embassy was waiting on decisions from the White House national security team. For additional details about the impact Department and embassy face while waiting on decisions from the White House national security team, see the Audit Results section of the report.

(U) Appendix C

(U) Embassy Kabul Response



Embassy of the United States of America

Kabul, Afghanistan

November 2, 2013

Dear Mr. Brown:

Embassy Kabul is gratified by the OIG audit report's recognition of our careful and holistic planning efforts for transitioning from a military to a civilian lead, internally reshaping our staffing and programs to suit a post-2014 environment, and managing the changes in logistical and life support.

While final decisions on the military footprint await conclusion of discussions on the Bilateral Security Agreement, the Embassy, Department of State, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), and the National Security Staff have closely coordinated our planning so that the assumptions we use are based on the most current information available and allow us the greatest latitude for flexibility. The Embassy's coordination with the NSS on a routine basis is via the Office of the Special Representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP). I also regularly participate in Deputies and Principal's meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "JBC", is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature that reads "James B. Cunningham".

James B. Cunningham

Ambassador

Referenced: (U) Audit of Department of State and Embassy Kabul Planning for the Transition to a Civilian-Led Mission in Afghanistan, (U) OIG/AUD Letter to Ambassador Cunningham dated 22 October 20

(U) Bureau of Diplomatic Security Response



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

www.state.gov

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

November 7, 2013

(UNCLASSIFIED when separated from attachments)

INFORMATION MEMO TO INSPECTOR GENERAL LINICK - OIG

FROM: DS/DSS – Gregory B. Starr

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Starr".

NOV 07 2013

SUBJECT: Comments on OIG Draft Report – Audit of Department of State and Embassy Kabul Planning for the Transition to a Civilian-Led Mission in Afghanistan

Attached are the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's formal comments to the OIG draft report.

Attachments:

As stated.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

(UNCLASSIFIED when separated from attachments)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

DS Comments to OIG Draft Report
Audit of Department of State and Embassy Kabul Planning for the Transition
to a Civilian-Led Mission in Afghanistan

~~(SBU)~~ **OIG Draft Report:** OIG was able to validate that the task status was correctly recorded for all 116 tasks included in our sample. Of the 20 late tasks, 15 were attributed to embassy transition planners still awaiting decisions from the White House national security staff. For example, two tasks assigned to the embassy Regional Security Office were related to the [Redacted] (b) (5)

[Redacted] A Regional Security Office official informed OIG that the tasks were late because decisions had not been made by the White House national security staff regarding [Redacted] (b) (5) and that the Regional Security Office cannot move forward to complete the tasks without those decisions. (page 11)

~~(SBU)~~ **DS comment:** DS is in regular contact with Embassy Kabul, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs / Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs (NEA/SCA) and the Office Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (S/RAP) regarding the future size and scope of overall USG footprint in Afghanistan and in particular the diplomatic Mission Afghanistan. While the final decision on the footprint awaits the conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), our planning is based on the most current information available to allow the greatest flexibility. Field presence is dependent on the future military footprint and other factors. The example cited in the report regarding the [Redacted] (b) (5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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