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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

July 21, 2017

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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The Honorable Robert Karem  
Acting Under Secretary for Policy  
Department of Defense  
2600 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Karem:

I am writing regarding a report that the Department of Defense (DOD) may have spent up to \$28 million more than needed to procure camouflage uniforms for the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Force (ANDSF).

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) recently released a report detailing DOD's procurement of camouflage uniforms for the ANDSF, specifically the Afghanistan National Army (ANA).<sup>1</sup> SIGAR concluded that the U.S. Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which oversees efforts to equip and train the ANA, failed to properly perform its due diligence when selecting a camouflage pattern, failed to determine whether the selected pattern was effective in the Afghan environment, improperly recommended that the U.S. pursue a sole-source award to the company that owned the proprietary camouflage license and uniform design, and failed to exercise effective oversight of the program to purchase the uniforms. Because of the proprietary pattern and uniform specifications, these uniforms cost roughly 40% more than comparable uniforms provided to the Afghan Border Police, Afghan Uniform Police, and the Afghan Local Police.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the increased costs of the chosen uniform specifications and the proprietary pattern, the camouflage chosen was not proven to be effective in the Afghan environment. CSTC-A allowed an Afghan Ministry of Defense official to choose a pattern while browsing the internet without subjecting the pattern to proper testing in order to verify its effectiveness in the Afghan environment. The official chose a "forest" pattern despite the fact that forests cover only 2.1 percent of Afghanistan's total land area. "As a result," according to the report, "neither DOD nor the Afghan government could demonstrate the appropriateness of the ANA uniform for the

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<sup>1</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Afghan National Army: DOD May Have Spent Up to \$28 Million More than Needed to Procure Camouflage Uniforms That May Be Inappropriate for the Afghan Environment* (SIGAR-17-48-SP) (June 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

Afghan environment, or show that the new camouflage pattern did not hinder ANA operations by providing a more clearly visible target to the enemy.”<sup>3</sup>

As part of CSTC-A’s obligation for validating ANA uniform requirements, budgeting funds to procure the uniforms, and placing orders to be filled, DOD is required to ensure that the requirements meet the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). DOD was unable to provide SIGAR with documentation demonstrating that the chosen camouflage specification was essential to the U.S. government’s requirement for the uniforms, market research indicating that other companies’ similar products were inadequate to meet DOD’s requirements, or documentation justifying or approving the chosen camouflage requirement in the ANA uniform specification. These failures raise the question of whether or not DOD properly abided by federal procurement law.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, SIGAR found that the Afghan government could not track clothing and equipment purchased using direct assistance from 2012 to 2013. Conditions established in commitment letters requiring the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior to use electronic systems to track clothing and equipment purchases were not enforced by CSTC-A. As a result, the command cannot provide accurate numbers of how much clothing and equipment the ministries bought with U.S. money. “CSTC-A officials said they chose not to enforce these requirements because the mission to fully equip the ANDSF superseded their mission to improve the ministries’ financial reporting practices,” according to the report. “As a result, CSTC-A did not properly oversee the money given to the Afghan government for clothing and equipment.”<sup>5</sup>

Between November 2008 and January 2017, DOD spent approximately \$93 million to procure 1.3 million uniforms for the ANA. CSTC-A’s failure to adequately manage and oversee the procurement cost taxpayers as much as \$28 million during this time period, not including other potential losses resulting from failed oversight over direct assistance provided to Afghanistan between 2012 and 2013.<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, SIGAR recommends that a DOD organization with appropriate expertise in military uniforms conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the current ANA uniform specification to determine if there is a more effective alternative pattern, considering both operational environment and cost, available to the ANA. “Such an analysis should include, at a minimum, establishing the efficacy of the existing pattern against other alternatives (both proprietary and non-proprietary patterns), a consideration of transitioning the ANA uniforms to a pattern owned

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> FAR 11.105.

<sup>5</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: DOD Needs to Improve Management and Oversight to Uniforms and Equipment (SIGAR-17-40 Audit Report) (Apr. 2017).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

by the United States, using excess inventory where available, and acquiring the rights to the proprietary pattern currently being used.”<sup>7</sup>

In order to understand DOD’s response to this report, its efforts to respond to the recommendations provided by SIGAR, and its plan to perform proper oversight over CSTC-A and its procurement of supplies for the ANDSF, please provide a written response to the following questions no later than August 4, 2017:

1. On June 14, 2017, Jedidiah Royal, the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia wrote a letter to SIGAR stating that his office was “working with appropriate DOD Components and the Afghan Ministry of Defense to conduct” a cost-benefit analysis of the current ANA uniform specifications to determine whether there is a more effective alternative, considering both operational environment and cost. Can you provide an update on the status of this analysis?
2. In the same letter, Deputy Assistant Secretary Royal states that his office is following up with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to ensure that current contracting practices for all Afghan uniforms conform to all FAR requirements. Can you provide an update on that inquiry? Can you confirm that current contracting practices conform to all FAR requirements?
3. What other steps is DOD taking to ensure proper oversight of the procurement of uniforms for ANDSF going forward?

If you have any questions please contact Jackson Eaton with my staff at (202) 224-2627 or Jackson\_Eaton@hsgac.senate.gov. Please send any official correspondence related to this request to Amanda Trosen at Amanda\_Trosen@hsgac.senate.gov. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson  
Chairman

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<sup>7</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Afghan National Army: DOD May Have Spent Up to \$28 Million More than Needed to Procure Camouflage Uniforms That May Be Inappropriate for the Afghan Environment (SIGAR-17-48-SP) (June 2017).