



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 3, 2014

Mr. John F. Sopko  
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)  
2530 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Re: SIGAR Inspection of Baghlan Prison Construction Project

Dear Mr. Sopko:

This is in response to your letter concerning the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's (INL) Baghlan prison construction project. The Department of State values the role played by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in safeguarding U.S. taxpayer investment, and we share your goals of implementing programs free from waste, fraud, and abuse.

The Department has carefully reviewed your alert letter of April 2, 2014 and the construction concerns that it discussed. We acknowledge that subsequent to the transfer of the prison facility to the government of Afghanistan, soil subsidence occurred at the site due to undetermined causes. On July 22, 2013, INL identified damages to the facility caused by soil subsidence and immediately notified the contracting officer. INL conducted site visits on August 18, 22, and 28, 2013 and released a comprehensive assessment of the structural damage on September 7, 2013. On August 24, 2013, INL informed the Department of State's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the structural deficiencies at the site and remained in communication with the OIG to coordinate remedial action. On October 2, at INL's request, the contracting officer submitted a cure notice to the contractor requiring repairs and rebuilding to correct the deficiencies identified in INL's September 7 assessment.

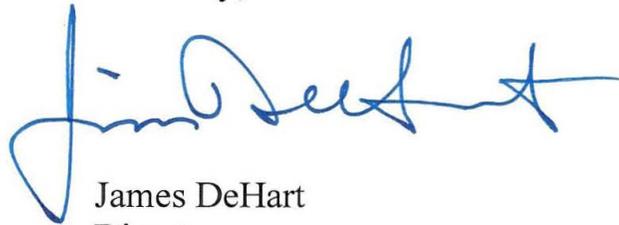
Your alert letter states that the design specifications developed by Suraya Construction and Production Company (Suraya) under a separate contract called for the use of unreinforced bricks walls. In fact, section 1.4.3 of the Baghlan prison specifications document created by Suraya states: "In addition to design requirements of [International Code Council International Building Code] ICC

IBC, the Contractor shall provide additional seismic reinforcement.” INL will continue to hold the contractor accountable to rectify deficient construction identified by INL in July 2013 and subsequently recognized by SIGAR. INL is committed to maintaining secure and safe facilities and will continue to comply with IBC standards in any future reconstruction contracts in Afghanistan.

The Department of State values independent oversight, including from SIGAR, and is working closely with the oversight community to protect taxpayer resources as well as enhance and improve the return on investment. INL has developed a multi-layered approach to oversight in Afghanistan and is putting in place a construction monitoring and reporting contract and plan to track daily construction activities at Baghlan prison and other sites, supplementing the current oversight conducted by INL personnel.

We stand ready to answer any questions or supply documents that would help SIGAR complete a more precise review of the Baghlan construction project. As always, members of the Department remain ready to meet at SIGAR’s convenience to clarify any persisting questions.

Sincerely,



James DeHart  
Director  
Bureau of International Narcotics and  
Law Enforcement