



SPECIAL EDITION WASTE REPORT for January 28, 2016 **DOD Loses \$29 million of Heavy Equipment in Afghanistan**

Today the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) issued a report on **the U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD) failed attempt to establish an Afghan equivalent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, losing \$29 million of heavy equipment in the process.**¹

According to the report, in late 2013 the DOD, working in concert with the Afghan National Army (ANA), established the National Engineering Brigade (NEB), "to provide national-level construction engineering efforts, including responding to natural disaster emergencies, building bridges, digging freshwater wells, and providing construction support to the ANA."

NEB was supposed to be "fully capable" by October 2014, but it soon became clear NEB would come up short, even with lower standards and an extended deadline. But the problem does not rest with NEB.

According to SIGAR, a major hindrance to NEB's success was a lack of needed equipment to train on and use in the field. **What makes this disturbing is that DOD delivered 1,400 pieces of equipment, at a cost of \$29 million, to the Afghan Central Supply Depot (a central warehousing arm of the ANA), for further delivery to the NEB. However, little of it made it to NEB.** For example, by December 2014 (a year after NEB was established), NEB still had no well drilling equipment or reverse osmosis water purification systems. They also had only one crane and none of the semi-trucks the U.S. taxpayer purchased on their behalf.

So how did heavy equipment like cranes and semi-trucks, purchased with your tax dollars, just disappear? No one knows. According to SIGAR, the ANA has persistent accountability issues at the Central Supply Depot, noting about \$370 million in spare vehicle parts purchased since 2004 are unaccounted for or missing. Given the problems at the Central Depot, it clearly would have been more logical for DOD to deliver the equipment directly to NEB.

While NEB has participated in some minimal operations, it still cannot function independently. SIGAR noted that as late as **June 2015, NEB still lacked necessary well drilling and hauling equipment.** They probably always will.

Without equipment, it is no wonder NEB is struggling. Of course, that is no comfort to the **4,021 U.S. taxpayers whose entire tax liability paid for this and were not made any safer as a result, or to the Afghans who still lack clean drinking water.**

¹ *Afghan National Engineering Brigade: Despite U.S. Training Efforts, the Brigade is Incapable of Operating Independently.* Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction; Arlington, VA; January 2016. Report number 16-15