SIGAR

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

SIGAR 19-53 Inspection Report

Afghan National Army Garrison at South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport: New Construction and Upgrades Generally Met Contract Requirements, but a Safety Hazard and Maintenance Issues Exist

AUGUST

2019

SIGAR | Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

August 22, 2019

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense

General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr.
Commander, U.S. Central Command

General Austin Scott Miller
Commander, U.S. Forces–Afghanistan and
Commander, Resolute Support

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Lieutenant General James E. Rainey
Commander, Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan

This report discusses the results of SIGAR's inspection of the new construction and utility upgrades at the Afghan National Army's (ANA) garrison at the South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport. On December 25, 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded a $6.9 million firm-fixed-price contract to Assist Consultants Inc. (ACI) to complete design work, build new support facilities, and upgrade some existing utility infrastructure. The new facilities included a well house, wastewater treatment plant, and pump house; the upgraded infrastructure included the garrison's water distribution system, generator, and two water storage tanks.

We found that the construction and upgrades generally met contract requirements. However, we identified one construction deficiency that resulted from ACI's noncompliance with contract requirements: ACI installed three sewer manholes at elevated heights in the road instead of in the sidewalks. Rising almost 8 inches above the road surface, these manholes are a safety hazard because they could damage vehicles driving over them. We also found that ACI installed control panels that complied with the contract, but had unauthorized Underwriters Laboratories markings on the product labels. USACE did not discover the deficiencies prior to approving the completed work.

We found that the support facilities and utility infrastructure upgrades ACI constructed at the ANA garrison are being used, but maintenance issues exist. The Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) and IDS International Government Services (IDS), a U.S. company, work together to maintain the facilities and upgrades, but a booster pump, mixer pump, and storage tank's water level gauge were not functioning. In addition, another booster pump is leaking water, an electrical transformer is leaking oil, and some tree branches are touching utility poles and transmission lines, which could cause a fire.

We are making one recommendation in this report. We recommend that the Commander of the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) notify the MOD of the six maintenance issues at the garrison—the nonfunctioning booster pump, mixer pump in well house No. 101, and water level gauge on water storage tank no. 100A; the leaking booster pump and electrical transformer; and the trees surrounding the electrical poles and transmission lines—so the MOD can direct IDS to fix them.

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. CSTC-A and USACE provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendices II and III, respectively. Although CSTC-A concurred with our recommendation and notified IDS International, through USACE, to correct the deficiencies we identified, the MOD has been responsible for maintenance at ANA SKAIA since the warranty expired more than one year ago. Because the MOD is now responsible for maintenance, we specifically recommended that the CSTC-A Commander notify the MOD of the six maintenance issues at the garrison, and we maintain that the MOD should be directly notified. Therefore, the recommendation remains open.

USACE stated that it generally agreed with the report but expressed two concerns. First, USACE said the height of the manholes complies with the contract. USACE added that the manholes would be level with the new road, which was to be constructed under a separate contract after this project was completed and transferred. However, as stated in our report, ACI was required to construct the manholes in the sidewalks, not in the road. In addition, we visited the ANA garrison again on July 23, 2019, and found that no road construction had taken place since our July 11, 2018, site visit. Instead, dirt was packed around the manholes. Second, USACE acknowledged that the control panels ACI installed have unauthorized certification markings on the product labels, but said the panels meet contract requirements and are not a safety concern. We agree that the control panels comply with the contract requirements, as stated in the report. However, we did not state that the control panels are a safety concern.

We conducted this inspection under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; and in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	Assist Consultants Inc.
ANA	Afghan National Army
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan
IDS	IDS International Government Services
MOD	Ministry of Defense
SKAIA	South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport
UL	Underwriters Laboratories
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

On September 26, 2012, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded an approximately $6 million firm-fixed-price contract to Rameesha Construction and Engineering Inc., an Afghan company, to design and construct upgrades to the existing Afghan National Army (ANA) garrison at the South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport (SKAIA). In January 2014, USACE terminated the contract for default after Rameesha had completed 65 percent of the design but none of the upgrades.

On December 25, 2014, USACE awarded a $6.9 million firm-fixed-price contract to Assist Consultants Inc. (ACI), also an Afghan company, to complete the design work, build new facilities, and upgrade some existing utility infrastructure at the ANA garrison. The new facilities included a well house, wastewater treatment plant, and pump house; the upgraded infrastructure included the garrison's water distribution system, generator, and two water storage tanks. The contract also required ACI to upgrade existing sewer lines, transformers, underground and overhead electric lines, lift station, and well houses.[1]

USACE issued a notice to proceed to ACI to begin the work on February 7, 2015, with a completion date of February 27, 2016. USACE modified the contract 13 times, which increased the project's value by $200,679, for a total of $7.1 million, and extended the completion date to May 21, 2017. ACI completed the project on May 7, 2017. The Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) accepted the new support facilities and upgraded infrastructure except for the wastewater treatment plant, and transferred them to the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) in May 2017. The warranty for these facilities and infrastructure expired in May 2018. CSTC-A accepted the wastewater treatment plant in June 2017 and transferred it to the MOD in August 2017. The warranty for the plant expired in June 2018.

The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether the (1) construction and upgrades were completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) facilities and utilities are being used and maintained.

We conducted our work in Kabul, Afghanistan, from September 2017 through August 2019, in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Our professional engineers conducted the engineering assessment in accordance with the National Society of Professional Engineer's *Code of Ethics for Engineers*. Appendix I contains a detailed discussion of our scope and methodology.

THE NEW CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADES AT THE ANA GARRISON GENERALLY MET CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS, BUT ONE DEFICIENCY CREATED A SAFETY HAZARD

We visited the ANA garrison at SKAIA eight times from June 24, 2018, through July 17, 2018, and found that the new support facilities and utility infrastructure upgrades generally met contract requirements. For example, ACI built a well house, a pump house with three pumps, and two water storage tanks, as the contract required. Further, in May 2015, USACE approved ACI's submittal to purchase and install Pedrollo booster pumps.[2] During our June 26, 2018, site visit, we found that ACI installed the three pumps.

In addition, the design drawings and the contract's technical specifications listed the requirements for constructing the lift station's bollards, including the proper paint to use, the material inside the bollards, and how deep they should be placed in the ground.[3] During our July 4, 2018, and July 11, 2018, site visits, we found that ACI installed the bollards according to the specifications.

[1] Lift stations are designed to move wastewater from a lower to higher elevation through pipes.

[2] Booster pumps increase the pressure of the water system.

[3] Bollards are steel pipes filled with concrete that protect buildings and equipment from vehicular impacts.

However, we also found one construction deficiency that resulted from ACI's noncompliance with contract requirements. The contractor installed three sewer manholes at elevated heights in the road instead of in the sidewalks, as the contract required; creating a safety hazards for vehicles. We also found that ACI installed control panels that complied with the contract but had unauthorized Underwriters Laboratories (UL) markings on the labels.

ACI Did Not Install Three Sewer Manholes in the Correct Locations

During our July 2018 site visits, we found that ACI installed three sewer manholes in the wrong locations. The contract's design drawings required the manholes to be located in the sidewalks at the same height as the sidewalk. However, we found that ACI constructed the three manholes in the road and almost 8 inches above the road's surface (see photo 1). The three manholes pose a safety risk and could damage vehicles driving over them.

Photo 1 - Manhole Constructed in the Road

Source: SIGAR, July 17, 2018

ACI Installed Control Panels with Unauthorized Certification Markings on the Labels

USACE approved ACI's submittals to provide and install PanelTech control panels. During our July 2018 site visits, we found that ACI installed control panels that complied with the contract, but they had unauthorized UL marks on the labels.[4] The contract required the control panels to meet one of the following requirements: (1) be "UL Listed," (2) be tested and marked by another nationally recognized testing laboratory, or (3) meet British or International standards, or be an International Electrotechnical Commission manufactured and type-tested assembly.

According to UL's *Marking and Application Guide: Panelboards*, the only way to determine whether UL has certified a product is to look for the UL mark on the product label. The UL mark indicates that UL has tested and evaluated representative samples of that product, and determined that they meet the applicable standards.[5] However, the UL mark may only be used on products that UL has certified and under the terms of a written agreement between the manufacturer and UL. For panelboards, UL has two markings: a UL Listed mark and a UL Classified mark (see figures 1 and 2). If a product bears a Listed mark, it means UL determined that representative samples of this product meet UL's safety requirements, which are primarily based on UL's standards for safety, or other recognized third-party standards. This mark includes the UL symbol, the word "Listed," the product or category name, and a UL-assigned control number. The Classified mark appears on representative samples of products that UL has evaluated but only with respect to specific properties, a limited

[4] In the contract documentation, the terms "panelboards" and "control panels" were used interchangeably. However, the NFPA *70 National Electrical* Code defines "panelboard" as a single panel or group of panel units designed for assembly in the form of a single panel. It includes automatic overcurrent devices, and equipped with or without switches to control light, heat, or power circuits; designed to be placed in a cabinet or cutout box placed in or against a wall, partition, or other support; and accessible only from the front. The *National Electrical* Code defines "industrial control panel" as an assembly of two or more components consisting of one of the following: (1) power circuit components only, such as motor controllers, overload relays, fused disconnect switches, and circuit breakers; (2) control circuit components only, such as push buttons, pilot lights, selector switches, timers, switches, and control relays; (3) a combination of power and control circuit components.

[5] For more on the standards, see Underwriters Laboratories, "*Panelboards Marking and Application Guide*," July 2016, accessed June 15, 2019, https://legacy-uploads.ul.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Panelboards_MG.pdf.

range of hazards, or suitability for use under limited or special conditions. This mark includes the UL symbol, the word "Classified," a statement of the evaluation's scope, the product or category name, and an assigned UL control number.

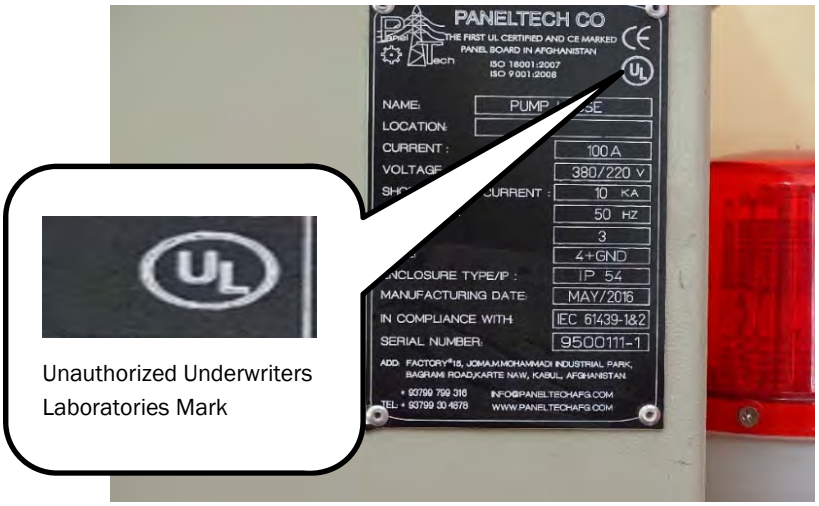
Figure 1 - Authorized UL Listed Mark

Source: UL, *Marking and Application Guide: Panelboards.*

Figure 2 - Authorized UL Classified Mark

Source: UL, *Marking and Application Guide: Panelboards.*

Photo 2 - Control Panel in a Well House with an Unauthorized UL Mark



Source: SIGAR, June 26, 2018

The control panels ACI installed had a UL mark on the labels, but these marks did not include the word "Listed" or "Classified," or any other UL Listed or UL Classified characteristics. After additional research, we found that PanelTech and its electrical equipment were not included in UL's online directory, which lists all of the companies and products that UL has certified. As a result, PanelTech was not authorized to use the UL mark and should not have included the mark on its products. Photo 2 shows the control panel in a well house that USACE approved but that has a label with an unauthorized UL mark. Although the control panel complied with the contract, the unauthorized UL markings misrepresented the products' certification status.

In August 2018, a UL official told us the UL marks on the control panel labels we identified during our site visits were suspect because they did not include a file number or proof of certification. The official also told us he contacted PanelTech, and PanelTech told him the company thought it could reference UL because PanelTech had UL type examination certificates.[6] He said PanelTech agreed to remove the UL mark, logo, and phrase "UL Certified" from its labels and product literature.

[6] A UL type examination certificate indicates that UL investigated a sample of the product described on the certificate and determined that it complied with the certificate standard(s). The certificate applies only to the product sample that the applicant submitted.

THE NEW FACILITIES AND UPGRADES AT THE ANA GARRISION ARE BEING USED, BUT MAINTENANCE ISSUES EXIST

During our 2018 site visits, we found that the ANA was using the newly constructed support facilities and utility infrastructure upgrades at the ANA garrison at SKAIA, including the wastewater treatment plant, water supply, and the electrical system. The MOD has been responsible for maintaining the garrison's facilities and upgrades since May 2017. The MOD and IDS International Government Services (IDS), a U.S. company, work together to maintain them.

We found that IDS was maintaining the new wastewater treatment plant, which included performing daily laboratory tests to ensure that the treated discharged water was meeting the required standards. However, we also found six maintenance issues, including a nonfunctioning booster pump, mixer pump, and water level gauge for one of the water storage tanks that were not functioning (see table 1). These raise questions about the quality of IDS's services.

Table 1 - Nonfunctioning Equipment SIGAR Found at the ANA Garrison at SKAIA

Deficiency	Description
Nonfunctioning booster pump	One of the three booster pumps was not functioning. The nonfunctioning booster pump increases the pump's operating time and shortens the life of the two remaining booster pumps.
Nonfunctioning mixer pump	One of the new well houses (No. 101) had a mixer pump that was not functioning. According to IDS, the onsite staff mixes the chlorine in the tank manually. As a result, there might not be enough chlorine in the water, which could lead to harmful bacteria.
Nonfunctioning water level gauge on a water storage tank	The water level gauge for one of the water storage tanks (No. 100A) was not functioning. According to IDS, the gauge has not worked since January 2018. IDS informed ACI of the issue because the equipment was still under warranty then. However, at the time of our site visits, ACI had not fixed the gauge. Without it, ANA personnel do not know how much water is in the tank.

Source: SIGAR site visits.

In addition to the nonfunctioning equipment, we found that another booster pump was leaking water and one of the electrical transformers was leaking oil. The leaking booster pump can waste drinking water, while the leaking transformer can cause the unit to overheat during peak load times, which could cause a fire or explosion.

We also found tree branches surrounding 5 of the 74 electrical poles and their transmission lines (see photo 3). When transmission lines pass through trees, the contract's technical specifications require that the trees be trimmed at least 15 feet on both sides, horizontally and below for medium-voltage lines, and 5 feet on both sides, horizontally and below for other lines. We found that tree branches were touching the electrical poles and transmission lines in two cases. As a result, electricity could jump from the power line to a tree during a lightning strike or voltage surge, and could injure or kill someone near the tree or cause a fire. However, based on documents available to us, we could not determine whether this situation was due to a lack of regularly trimming the trees or because ACI did not trim the trees when it installed the poles and lines.

Photo 3 - Trees Branches Surrounding an Electrical Pole and Transmission Lines

Source: SIGAR, July 17, 2018

CONCLUSION

The new facilities and infrastructure upgrades at the ANA garrison at SKAIA generally met contract requirements. However, ACI constructed three manholes at elevated heights in the road instead of in the sidewalks, as the contract required, creating a safety hazard for vehicles. Additionally, although ACI installed control panels that complied with the contract, the unauthorized UL marks are a false representation of the equipment's certification status.

While the new facilities and infrastructure upgrades are being used, several maintenance issues exist, specifically nonfunctioning and leaking equipment, and tree branches growing around electric poles and transmission lines. These maintenance issues pose safety risks, could affect the future usage of this equipment, and raise concerns about the quality of the services provided by the MOD's maintenance contractor.

RECOMMENDATION

To protect the U.S. taxpayers' investment in the new construction and upgrades to the ANA garrison at SKAIA, we recommend that the Commander of the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan:

1. Notify the Ministry of Defense of the six maintenance issues at the garrison—nonfunctioning booster pump, mixer pump in well house No. 101, and water level gauge on water storage tank No. 100A; the leaking booster pump and electrical transformer; and the trees surrounding the electrical poles and transmission lines—so the ministry can direct IDS International Government Services to correct them.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Defense for review and comment. CSTC-A and USACE provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendices II and III, respectively. CSTC-A concurred with our recommendation and USACE generally agreed with the report but expressed two concerns.

Although CSTC-A concurred with our recommendation and notified IDS International, through USACE, to correct the deficiencies we identified, the MOD is responsible for maintenance at ANA SKAIA since the warranty expired more than one year ago. Because the MOD is now responsible for maintenance, we specifically recommended that the CSTC-A Commander notify the MOD of the six maintenance issues at the garrison, and we maintain that the MOD should be directly notified. Therefore, the recommendation remains open.

USACE stated that it generally agreed with the report but expressed two concerns. First, USACE said the height of the manholes complies with the contract. USACE added that the manholes would be level with the new road, which was to be constructed under a separate contract after this project was completed and transferred. However, as stated in our report, ACI was required to construct the manholes in the sidewalks, not in the road. In addition, we visited the ANA garrison again on July 23, 2019, and found that no road construction had taken place since our July 11, 2018, site visit. Instead, dirt was packed around the manholes. Second, USACE acknowledged that the control panels ACI installed have unauthorized certification markings on the product labels, but said the panels meet contract requirements and are not a safety concern. We agree that the control panels comply with the contract requirements, as stated in the report. However, we did not state that the control panels are a safety concern.

APPENDIX I - SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of SIGAR's inspection of the construction of new support facilities construction and upgrades of existing utilities infrastructure at the Afghan National Army's (ANA) garrison at the South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport. The objectives of this inspection were to determine whether the (1) construction and upgrades were completed in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, and (2) facilities and utilities are being used and maintained. Specifically, we

- reviewed contract documents, drawings, design submittals, and other relevant project documentation;
- interviewed U.S. and Afghan government officials concerning the project's construction, use, and maintenance; and
- conducted eight site visits on June 24, 26, and 30, 2018; July 2, 4, 6, 11, and 17, 2018; and a follow-up site visit on July 23, 2019.

We did not rely on computer-processed data in conducting this inspection. However, we considered compliance with laws and indicators of fraud, other illegal acts, and abuse, and their potential impact.

In December 2014, SIGAR entered into a cooperative agreement with Afghan civil society partners. Under this agreement, our Afghan partners conduct specific inspections, evaluations, and other analyses. In this regard, Afghan engineers inspected the ANA garrison at SKAIA in June and July 2018, and July 2019. We developed a standardized engineering evaluation checklist covering items required by the contract and design and specification documents. Our checklist required our partners to analyze the contract documents, scope of work, technical specifications, and design drawings.

We compared the information our Afghan civil society partners provided to accepted engineering practices, relevant standards, regulations, laws, and codes for quality and accuracy. In addition, as part of our monitoring and quality control process, we

- met with our Afghan engineer partners to ensure that the approach and planning for the inspection were consistent with the objectives of our inspection and the terms of our cooperative agreement;
- attended periodic meetings with our partners and conducted our normal entrance and exit conference with agency officials;
- discussed significant inspection issues with the partners and officials, as necessary;
- monitored our partners' progress in meeting milestones and revised contract delivery dates as needed; and
- conducted oversight of our partners in accordance with SIGAR's policies and procedures to ensure that their work resulted in impartial, credible, and reliable information.

We conducted our inspection work in Kabul, Afghanistan, from September 2017 through August 2019. This work was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Our professional engineers conducted the engineering assessment in accordance with the National Society of Professional Engineers' *Code of Ethics for Engineers.* We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our inspection objectives. We conducted this inspection under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

UNCLASSIFIED
HEADQUARTERS RESOLUTE SUPPORT
COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND – AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09320

DCOS SA/CSTC-A

25 June 2019

MEMORANDUM THRU

United States Forces – Afghanistan DCDR-S, APO AE 09356
United States Central Command (CCIG), MacDill Air Force Base, FL 33621

FOR Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2530 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202-3940

SUBJECT: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) SIGAR- I-050 Draft Report "Afghan National Army Garrison at South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport: New Construction and Upgrades Generally Met Contract Requirements, but a Safety Hazard and Maintenance Issues Exist".

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a response to the SIGAR-I-050 Draft Report "Afghan National Army Garrison at South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport: New Construction and Upgrades Generally Met Contract Requirements, but a Safety Hazard and Maintenance Issues Exist".

2. CSTC-A concurs with the recommendation that CSTC-A notify the MOD of the five maintenance issues at the garrison - the non-functioning booster pump, chlorine tank mixer-pump in well house no. 101, the water level gauge on water storage tank no. 100A; the leaking booster pump and electrical transformer; and the trees surrounding the electrical poles and transmission lines. CSTC-A has notified IDS International through USACE to correct these issues.

3. CSTC-A appreciates SIGAR's inspection program for ANDSF facilities and respectfully requests the final report reflect the comments and remarks as outlined above.

4. Point of contact is Mr. Robert Gerdes, robert.s.gerdes3.civ@mail.mil, DSN 318-449-9939

SHIRLEY.ERIC.PAUL.1156529822
Digitally signed by SHIRLEY.ERIC.PAUL.1156529822
Date: 2019.06.24 10:36:19 +04'30'

ERIC P. SHIRLEY
COL (OF-5), U. S. Army
DCOS SA/CSTC-A Chief of Staff

UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
TRANSATLANTIC DIVISION
201 PRINCE FREDERICK DRIVE
WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA 22602-4373

SUBJECT: Response to Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Draft Report I-050, Afghanistan's Afghan National Army Garrison at South Kabul Afghanistan International Airport

Mr. John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Sopko:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) response to the subject report.

USACE generally agrees with the inspection comments, however we have two concerns regarding statements made in the report.

We acknowledge the request to relocate the manholes away from the sidewalks and into the roadway. The manhole height is consistent with the contract requirements, and would be level with the new roads once built. However, the road construction was not in the scope of the USACE contract and was performed after completion and turnover of this utilities project. We request that SIGAR include this explanation in the report.

Second, although we do acknowledge the identification of Unauthorized Certification Markings noted in the report, the panels as installed meet the functional requirements of the contract and are therefore not a safety concern. We ask that SIGAR include this explanation in the report.

My point of contact for this response is Ms. Erin K. Connolly, TAD Internal Review Auditor (Interim). She may be reached by e-mail at erin.k.connolly@usace.army.mil or by telephone at 540-665-5348.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER G. BECK
COL, EN
Commanding

APPENDIX IV - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Steven Haughton, Senior Inspection Manager

Charles DeCarlo, Inspector-in-Charge

Javed Khairandish, Civil Engineer

Wilhelmina Pierce, General Engineer

Hasibullah Zeer, Program Analyst

This inspection was conducted
under project code SIGAR-I-050.

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- Phone International: +1-866-329-8893
- Phone DSN International: 312-664-0378
- U.S. fax: +1-703-601-4065

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Public Affairs Officer

- Phone: 703-545-5974
- Email: sigar.pentagon.ccr.mbx.public-affairs@mail.mil
- Mail: SIGAR Public Affairs
  2530 Crystal Drive
  Arlington, VA 22202