Project Title and Code: SIGAR LL-02: Lessons Learned from Aid Coordination in Afghanistan
Date: January 31, 2015
Interviewees: [Redacted]

SIGAR Attendees: Grant McLeod, Subject Matter Expert / Consultant
Location: Kabul, Afghanistan
Purpose: [Redacted]

Non-attribution Basis: Yes X No
Recorded: Yes No X

Summary of Key Discussion:
- Aid effectiveness has been a longstanding issue; There is so much room for efficiency; Afghanistan has pressed donors hard; Donors give lip service to aid effectiveness; Government has moved the budget to greater transparency; On par with other governments now; Afghanistan can account better than the donors; Donors are less transparent than the Afghan government;
- Afghan government signed up to off-budget funding even where donors priorities were being funded; Donors have the money and call the shots; Money hitting the ground is better than not; In hindsight he would have said no, even if it costs money; Improvement since Tokyo; More on-budget, but earmarked; Afghan ownership and leadership strengthens effectiveness; IC cannot coordinate itself; Afghan side needs to; First years did not have that
- ARTF is the best trust fund; It coordinates well and has a good system for alignment; To the contrary, LOTFA has not delivered capacity; It was not meant to serve that purpose;
- Alignment definition is too broad; Project level definition is required; Did agree on a definition, but it was never followed; NPPs were developed so there was no excuse; ANDS and NPP being broad is not an excuse; Donors agreed were consulted, but even they were segmented; UNAMA is sympathetic to the Afghan side, but has limited power;
- NPPs are still there, President wants them to be reduced and better coordinated; NPPs need to align with London paper; How to restructure is key; JCMB is less relevant because of 5+3; 5+3 is informal; Bigger donors push aside small donors; All donors should be respected; Would go back to JCMB;
- US role is central; US actions bring immediate outcomes in these areas; USAID and State are willing partners, but limited because of Congress; Could only go so far; US has biggest room to improve; Congress needs to recognize its system deficiencies; Congress needs to be on board;
- TMAF was a negotiated document that reflected Afghan and donor priorities; It was not forced on Afghanistan by the donors; It was a balance; 20 [+] deliverables government has delivered, donors have not;
- PRTs did not coordinate, parallel, circumvented national institutions; Not sustainable; Not one; Government institutions were small and developed by donors; Donors on the ground are sympathetic; HQ, decision;
- Many capacity building efforts in state institutions; Pushed structures that did not add value, just cost;

Follow-up:
- None.