

Pentagon Unable to Account for \$1.3 Billion of Afghan Aid



Washington, April 25 (RHC)-- The Pentagon cannot account for \$1.3 billion of an emergency funding which was directly routed to U.S. military officers in Afghanistan for critical reconstruction projects, an internal report reveals.

The missing money amounts to 60 percent of all such spending under the Commander's Emergency Response Program which meant to bypass bureaucracy and speed up the reconstruction of urgently-needed infrastructure damaged in more than 13 years of US war in Afghanistan, The McClatchy reports.

A year-long investigation by John F. Sopko, the U.S. special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, has found that the Pentagon could not provide financial information about 6 in 10 dollars of \$2.26 billion it has spent as part of the program between 2004 to 2014.

About 70 percent of the \$100 billion the United States has spent on Afghan projects so far has gone through the Defense Department, with the rest distributed by the US Agency for International Development and other departments.

The Pentagon has refused to comment on the findings of the inspector general's probe. However, U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and 19 other countries, suggested that some of the money was redirected from reconstruction to other more urgent war

requirements, including counterinsurgency.

The command did not explain why the funding earmarked for Afghan reconstruction would go to counterinsurgency which does belong to any of the categories defined by the Pentagon under the emergency program.

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