



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on November 12, 2022

Biden Admin Blocking Transparency on \$1 Billion Given to Afghanistan

“Follow the money” is a wise, common axiom for a reason, but it’s hard to follow the money when the government is doing all it can to cover its tracks.

The White House is currently trading barbs with a government watchdog known as The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), which was formed in 2008 to perform oversight functions on the \$146 billion reconstruction effort in the middle eastern country. SIGAR contends that the Treasury and State Departments are refusing to cooperate with its investigations, preventing the watchdog from giving a proper account to Congress and to the American people.



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In its new [report to Congress](#), SIGAR said that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) “and the Treasury Department refused to cooperate with SIGAR in any capacity, while the State Department was selective in the information it provided pursuant to SIGAR’s audit and quarterly data requests.”

SIGAR called this lack of cooperation a “direct violation” of the group’s congressional mandate, as the administration is preventing it from verifying how the government is spending \$1.1 billion in taxpayer dollars that have been handed to Afghanistan since the Taliban took over in August of 2021.

In addition, SIGAR claims, the White House is concealing information that would allow the watchdog to determine whether the State Department is in compliance with laws banning the sending of American money to the Taliban. The administration is also allegedly hiding evidence related to the fall of the U.S.-supporte Afghan government that was toppled by the Taliban.

“No federal agency has challenged SIGAR’s authority to conduct oversight of such programs until now,” the group stated in its report.

The *Washington Free Beacon* reports:

“After more than a decade of cooperation, State, and USAID have for months now refused to provide SIGAR with information and assistance needed for several audits and Congressionally mandated reviews” into the “collapse of the U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan,” the report says. These agencies are also withholding information pertaining to their “compliance with laws and regulations prohibiting the transfer of funds to the Taliban.”

A State Department official further “informed SIGAR that department staff have received internal direction to not engage with or speak to SIGAR without prior clearance from State



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legal counsel,” a directive that violates laws meant to protect government whistleblowers and protect SIGAR’s investigation power, according to the report.

The State Department maintains that SIGAR is overreaching its jurisdiction and that it is not legally required to comply with any information requests that pertain to the \$1.1 billion allocated for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. A July 8 letter sent to SIGAR by the State Department outlines these concerns, according to a copy obtained by the Free Beacon.

The State Department defended itself, arguing that “Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the United States has stopped providing assistance for the purpose of the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It told SIGAR that “Since August 2021, the United States has dramatically changed the nature and scope of its activities in Afghanistan to focus instead on humanitarian aid and targeted assistance designed to help meet basic human needs and avoid complete and imminent economic collapse.”

According to the administration, because the taxpayer funds are no longer being used for “reconstruction,” they no longer fall under the purview of SIGAR.

But SIGAR took issue with this line of reasoning, writing in its report that most of the aid programs presently in operation are, in fact, “continuations of activities performed prior to August 2021” and “State and USAID have not articulated how these programs have changed in practice.”

Moreover, SIGAR affirms that Congress “was clear when it granted SIGAR jurisdiction in its 2008 enabling legislation over all reconstruction spending in Afghanistan, including development and humanitarian aid.”

Despite the arguments, Ned Price, a State Department spokesman, told the *Free Beacon* that government officials will continue to stonewall SIGAR.

“Our position is that, except for certain specific funds, SIGAR’s statutory mandate is limited to funds available for, quote, ‘the reconstruction of Afghanistan,’ Price stated. “SIGAR’s current work does not appear to fall under its statutory mandate to oversee the funds for, quote, ‘the reconstruction of Afghanistan.’”

The question is: What is the White House hiding in the \$1.1 billion to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan that it doesn’t want Congress—or the people—to see?



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