

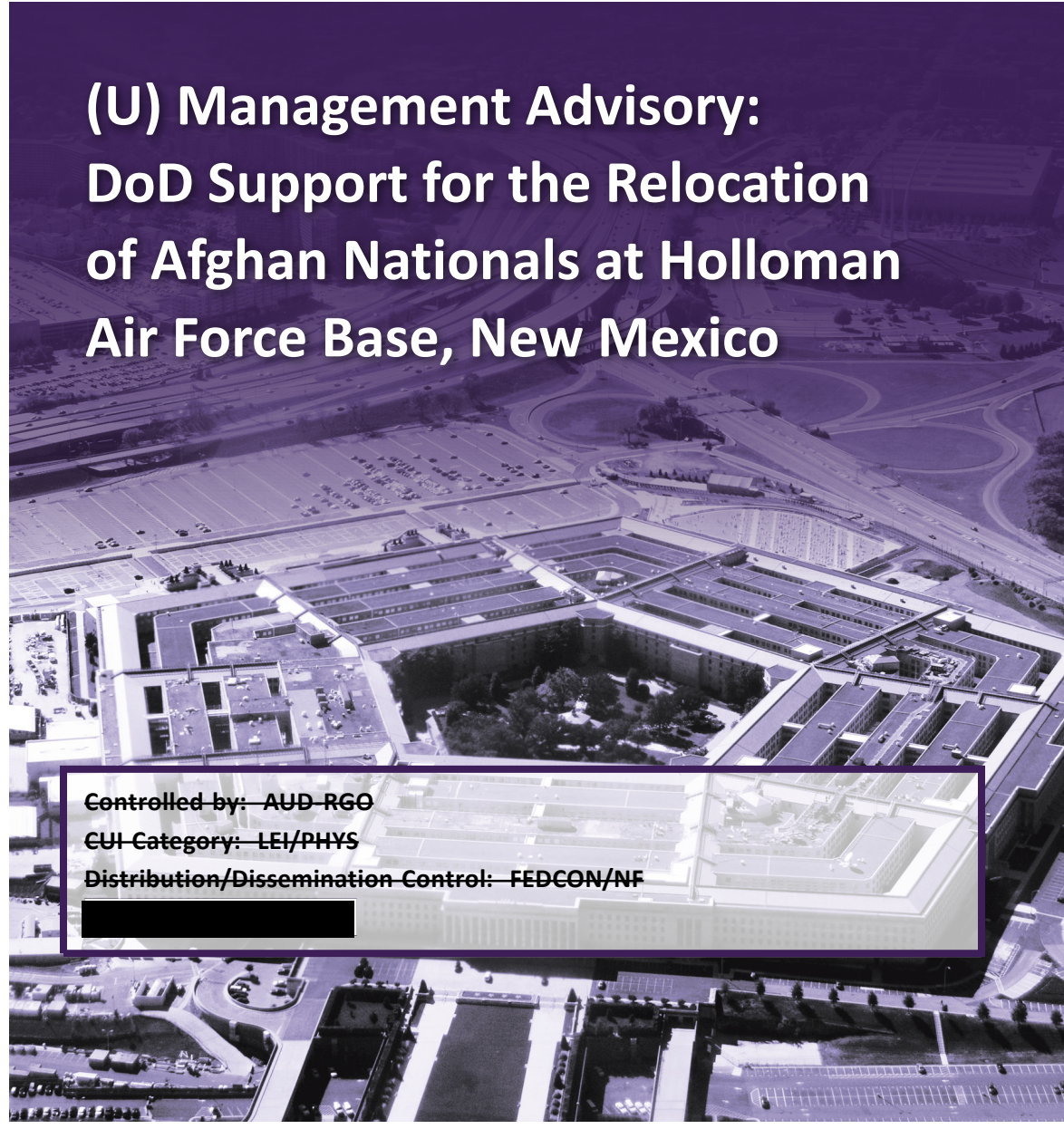


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INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

MARCH 3, 2022

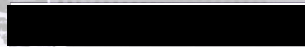


(U) Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico

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**INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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March 3, 2022

(U) MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY NORTH
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

(U) SUBJECT: Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of
Afghan Nationals at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico
(Report No. DODIG-2022-067)

(U) The purpose of this management advisory is to provide the officials responsible for receiving, housing, supporting, and preparing Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location with the results from our site visit to Task Force (TF) Holloman at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. The audit team visited TF Holloman from November 8 through 12, 2021. We conducted the work on this project with integrity, objectivity, and independence, as required by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General.

(U) We conducted our review of TF Holloman operations at Holloman Air Force Base as part of the "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals (Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000)."¹ The objective of this audit is to determine whether the DoD adequately planned and provided support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The audit team visited Holloman Air Force Base to review housing and other facilities, security, medical care, and costs associated with this effort.

(U) TF Holloman housed and sustained Afghan evacuees through use of dedicated resources, to include personnel, equipment, and supplies.² TF Holloman experienced challenges in purchasing needed supplies and providing medical care for Afghan evacuees due to limited resources in the local economy. The base operations and support services contractor also had challenges hiring personnel.

¹ (U) DoD OIG Project No. D2021-D000RJ-0154.000, "Audit of DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals," announced on August 23, 2021.

² (U) DoD, interagency, and non-governmental organization personnel supported TF Holloman. However, for the purpose of this report, we refer to TF Holloman personnel as DoD personnel.

(U) Operation Allies Refuge

(U) On July 14, 2021, the President announced Operation Allies Refuge, with the Department of State (DOS) as the lead Federal agency, to support the relocation of Afghan evacuees who previously supported the U.S. Government and were in the Special Immigrant Visa application process.³ Applicants' immediate family members were also included in the relocation effort. During Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the U.S. Government employed Afghans in supporting roles to assist in these operations. Due to that employment, some Afghans, their families, and close friends, faced serious and ongoing threats. According to a statement by the President on August 30, 2021, the DoD executed the largest airlift in U.S. history, evacuating more than 120,000 people from Afghanistan in just 17 days. The DOS activated the Afghanistan Coordination Task Force and requested and received DoD support in the form of temporary housing, sustainment, and other support at suitable DoD facilities both within and outside the continental United States.⁴

(U) Operation Allies Welcome

(U) On August 29, 2021, the President announced that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would serve as the lead Federal agency for Operation Allies Welcome, coordinating ongoing efforts across the U.S. Government to resettle vulnerable Afghans in the United States, including those who worked for the United States and Coalition forces since 2001.⁵ The DHS processes, screens, and vets Afghans in coordination with the DoD, the DOS, and other Federal agencies. The DOS and the Department of Health and Human Services are responsible for the final resettlement and integration efforts.

(U) DoD Roles and Responsibilities Supporting Operation Allies Welcome

(U) On August 15, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed the U.S. Northern Command to provide temporary housing, sustainment, and support inside the United States for Afghan evacuees, their families, and other individuals at risk from the Taliban. As the DoD's lead combatant command for Operation Allies Welcome, the U.S. Northern Command provides housing and security at U.S. military installations. As of February 19, 2022, all remaining Afghan evacuees had been resettled from the last U.S.-based military installation supporting the relocation of Afghan evacuees under Operation Allies Welcome.⁶ Holloman Air Force Base resettled its last Afghan evacuees in January 2022.

³ (U) In 2014, Congress amended the Special Immigrant Visa program to provide U.S. visas for translators and interpreters who performed "sensitive and trusted activities" for the U.S. Government in Afghanistan.

⁴ (U) The DOS leads the Afghanistan Coordination Task Force that includes experts from various U.S. Government agencies, including the DoD, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

⁵ (U) Operation Allies Refuge was the operation to airlift at-risk Afghan evacuees, who supported the DoD, out of Afghanistan. Operation Allies Welcome is an ongoing effort across the U.S. Government to support these Afghan evacuees as they resettle in the United States.

⁶ (U) The following U.S.-based military installations supported Operation Allies Welcome: Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Fort Bliss, Texas; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; Camp Atterbury, Indiana; Fort Pickett, Virginia; Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; and Fort Lee, Virginia. Those installations processed their final evacuees between November 17, 2021, and February 19, 2022.

(U) Holloman Air Force Base Operations and Task Force Holloman

(U) Holloman Air Force Base, located near Alamogordo, New Mexico, is a training installation for fighter pilots and drone operators, and home to a variety of organizations providing scientific and technical support to the Air Force and the DoD. On August 24, 2021, the U.S. Northern Command formed TF Holloman to support Operation Allies Welcome with the mission to safely receive, house, support, and prepare Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location. As of November 8, 2021, TF Holloman was composed of 713 Air Force personnel with support from 152 interagency personnel and commanded by an Air National Guard Brigadier General.

(U) TF Holloman leadership stated that the task force stood up according to the following timeline.

- (U) On August 24, 2021, TF Holloman expanded the base operations and support services contract to include housing and sustainment support for Afghan evacuees.⁷
- (U) On August 28, 2021, the base operations and support services contractor began construction of housing and sustainment facilities.
- (U) On August 31, 2021, 1,000 Afghan evacuees arrived at Holloman Air Force Base.
- (U) By September 12, 2021, the base operations and support services contractor had expanded TF Holloman facilities to house up to 5,000 Afghan evacuees.
- (U) In October 2021, the DHS published a consolidation plan for the U.S. installations housing Afghan evacuees. The DHS listed Holloman Air Force Base as one of the final three installations to close.⁸
- (U) As of January 26, 2022, TF Holloman had received, medically processed, and resettled 7,221 Afghan evacuees.

(U) Afghan Evacuee In-Processing at Holloman Air Force Base

(U) There were no Afghan evacuees being in-processed during the audit team's site visit; however, TF Holloman officials walked the audit team through the process it used and provided the audit team a tour of the facilities. TF Holloman officials stated that as Afghan evacuees arrived at Holloman Air Force Base, task force officials first provided the evacuees an orientation that discussed the housing village. Contractor personnel issued each Afghan evacuee a wristband with a unique identification number. Each wristband was color coded—yellow for families, blue for single males, and orange for single females.

⁷ (U) The Air Force Contract Augmentation Program provides base operations and support services, such as engineering design, construction, food service, lodging, and laundry.

⁸ (U) According to the DHS consolidation plan, Holloman Air Force Base, Fort McCoy, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst would be the final three installations to close.

(U) Additionally, representatives from a non-governmental organization entered biographical information into the Hummingbird database.⁹ Figure 1 shows an example of a wristband for an Afghan evacuee who is part of a family unit.



(U) Figure 1. Example of a Wristband for an Afghan Evacuee
 (U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) Task Force Holloman Successes and Challenges

(U) From November 8 through 12, 2021, the audit team conducted a site visit to Holloman Air Force Base to observe the facility conditions and treatment of Afghan evacuees.

Specifically, TF Holloman provided:

- (U) housing and sustainment support, including living space, food, and water;
- (U) medical care, including access to vaccines and procedures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (such as coronavirus disease–2019 [COVID-19]);
- (U) physical security and accountability; and
- (U) lines of communication with Afghan evacuees.

(U) The audit team also identified challenges with TF Holloman operations. Specifically, the local economy around Holloman Air Force Base posed problems in hiring personnel for the base operations and support services contract, purchasing needed supplies, and providing medical care for Afghan evacuees.

(U) Housing and Sustainment Support

(U) TF Holloman provided housing and sustainment facilities for Afghan evacuees at Holloman Air Force Base. TF Holloman used tents to establish a village for the Afghan population. The village included tents for housing, dining, and storing and distributing donated items, as well as multipurpose spaces for use by the Afghan evacuees and an

⁹ (U) The Hummingbird database is a DOS-owned database used to support Operation Allies Welcome. The system captures Afghan evacuees' identification data, such as name, date of birth, and passport number; medical data, such as lab results, vaccinations, and medical exams; and biometric data, such as fingerprints and photos for immigrants seeking resettlement.

(U) administrative area for village governance, and other support activities. The village had two TF Holloman mayors responsible for public safety and the care of Afghan evacuees and one TF Holloman governor above the mayors who was responsible for overall sustainment operations in the village.¹⁰

(U) Housing

(U) TF Holloman housed 4,100 Afghan evacuees in 11 climate-controlled tents. Nine tents housed families, with one of those tents containing a sub-section for single females and their children. TF Holloman constructed this tent with a single entrance and six externally locked emergency exits to limit access by unauthorized visitors, as identified by their color-coded wristbands. TF Holloman housed single males separately in two tents. Additionally, TF Holloman officials used the color-coded wristbands to restrict access to the single male tents and to prevent minors from entering.

(U) TF Holloman officials partitioned the family and female-only tents into individual rooms, with walls constructed of either plywood or fire-retardant black plastic sheeting. A TF Holloman official stated that the initial plan was to construct all partitions from plywood, but due to supply shortages of plywood in the surrounding area, TF Holloman used plastic sheeting instead. Each room housed up to three adults and two children, and rooms were connected for larger families. In the tents for single males, TF Holloman officials constructed 10-person “pods” separated by plywood half-walls. Figure 2 shows a family tent separated into rooms.



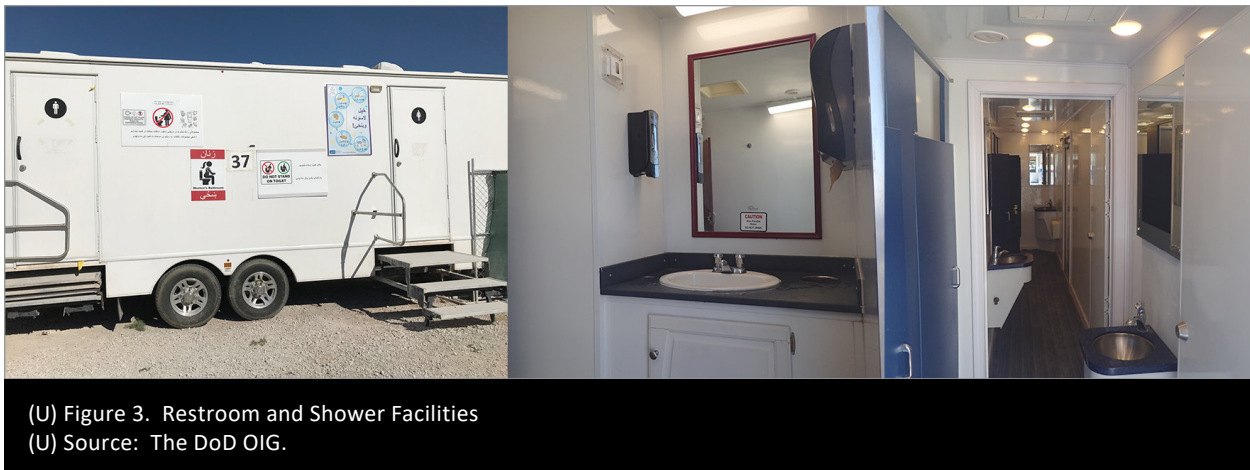
(U) Figure 2. Family Tent Separated Into Rooms
(U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) During a walkthrough, DoD OIG engineers accompanying the audit team found fire safety concerns in three of the tents. Specifically, the DoD OIG engineers observed both a lack of smoke detectors and the improper placement of smoke detectors in three of the tents reviewed. The tents had smoke detectors only by the entrances, and smoke detectors were missing from the center of the tents, which could limit the effectiveness of the fire alarm system should a fire occur. Additionally, the DoD OIG engineers identified emergency exit signs that did not switch to battery backup power when tested or illuminate when connected to the tent’s electricity. The DoD OIG engineers also observed that occupants could

¹⁰ (U) The TF Holloman mayors and governor were military personnel. TF Holloman mayors operated out of an office known as the “mayor’s cell.” The mayor’s cell was open throughout the day to address the sustainment needs of Afghan evacuees, such as requests to move housing tent locations and response to safety incidents.

(U) not see emergency exit signs from interior hallways. After the walkthrough, the DoD OIG engineers notified TF Holloman officials of these issues. TF Holloman officials stated that the task force addressed all identified issues, such as repairing the non-functional emergency exit signs, in December 2021.

(U) The village had 90 gender-segregated restroom and shower trailers. TF Holloman surrounded the women's facilities with privacy screens. Contractor personnel cleaned the restroom and shower trailers three times per day, and posters on the trailers provided instructions for contacting the contractor for additional cleaning services. Additionally, contractor personnel provided laundry drop-off services and a linen exchange for sheets, towels, and blankets. Figure 3 shows the restroom and shower facilities.



(U) Food and Water

(U) TF Holloman provided culturally appropriate food for Afghan evacuees. Specifically, Afghan evacuees received three halal meals per day, as well as a continuous supply of ready-made snacks.¹¹ Other convenience items, such as packaged snacks, personal care items, and cigarettes, were available for purchase in the Army and Air Force Exchange Services tent within the village. Additionally, pallets of water bottles were available throughout the village. TF Holloman officials held weekly shuras (meetings) regarding the dining facility to solicit feedback on the food provided.¹² As a result of feedback shared during the meetings, TF Holloman officials facilitated an Afghan cooking class for the contractor, taught by a group of female Afghan evacuee volunteers. A TF Holloman official stated that the TF would continue to hold weekly Afghan cooking classes to improve the quality of the food.

¹¹ (U) "Halal" is Arabic for "permissible" and indicates that food was prepared in accordance with Islamic law.

¹² (U) "Shura" is Arabic for "consultation." During a shura, community leaders meet to discuss communal affairs and resolve disputes.



(U) Figure 4. Dining Facility
 (U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) Figure 4 shows the interior of the dining facility.

(U) Purchased Goods and Donations

(U) TF Holloman constructed a distribution tent for clothing, toys, and personal care items for Afghan evacuees. The items were either donated by the local community or purchased through the base operations and support services contract. Afghan evacuees could collect personal care items, such as soap, baby formula, and diapers, from the tent whenever needed. For other items, such as coats and shoes, TF Holloman personnel established a pickup system based on

wristband numbers—Afghan evacuees with wristband numbers ending in 0 through 4 had a specified collection day, and Afghan evacuees with wristband numbers ending in 5 through 9 had a different day to collect these items. TF Holloman personnel stated that the task force enacted this plan to ensure an equitable distribution of items. Figure 5 shows items stored in the distribution tent.



(U) Figure 5. Items Stored in the Distribution Tent
 (U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) Cultural and Recreational Activities

(U) TF Holloman provided Afghan evacuees both indoor and outdoor spaces for cultural, recreational, and educational uses. TF Holloman dedicated two tents, one for each gender, for prayer and other religious activities. Additionally, two multipurpose tents were used for cultural and leisure activities, one for women and families, and one for men. Volunteers from non-governmental organizations coordinated recreational activities inside the two multipurpose tents, such as movies, dance parties, and social events.

(U) A third multipurpose tent was used for educational activities and holding meetings. Volunteers from non-governmental organizations held daily classes on topics ranging from English as a second language and cultural orientation to life in the United States, to employment workshops. Figure 6 shows the interior of the third multipurpose tent with educational material and children's art hung on the wall.



(U) Figure 6. Multipurpose Tent Used for Educational Activities

(U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) For outdoor recreation, the village had a lighted gravel walking path, as well as separate outdoor recreation and gathering spaces for men, women with children, and families. Each outdoor recreation area had a basketball court, a volleyball court, and a soccer field. A privacy screen surrounded the women's outdoor recreation area.

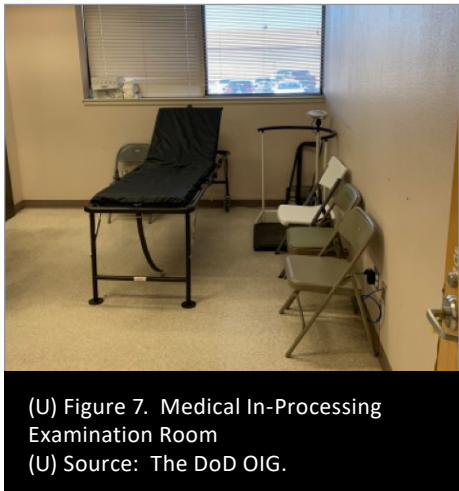
(U) Additionally, TF Holloman provided a call booth with telephones for Afghan evacuees to use, and cellular data service was available for Afghan evacuees who had cell phones. The base operations and support services contractor provided wireless internet throughout the village, which Afghan evacuees could use, free of charge, to communicate with family and friends and for recreational purposes.

(U) Medical Care

(U) Air Force Expeditionary Medical officials (TF Holloman medical officials) and contractors provided medical care to Afghan evacuees including medical in-processing and emergent care (acute care). TF Holloman medical officials initially conducted Afghan evacuee medical in-processing and provided all 13 vaccinations that are required as part of the immigration process. Additionally, at the time of our site visit, TF Holloman was transitioning acute care from TF Holloman medical officials to the contractor. Furthermore, TF Holloman medical officials developed policies and procedures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

(U) Use of All-Digital Medical Records for In-Processing

(U) When TF Holloman operations began, TF Holloman medical officials conducted Afghan evacuee medical in-processing, including performing physicals, collecting lab draws, and administering vaccines. TF Holloman medical officials stated that the task force installed a network server to set up an internal intranet. The intranet enabled TF Holloman medical officials to input medical information directly into the electronic forms during visits with patients versus writing hardcopy notes. The electronic method saved time and ensured there were no errors later when transcribing the information from written notes.



(U) TF Holloman medical officials also used a digital version of medical immigration forms that streamlined the process for completing medical in-processing for Afghan evacuees. For example, according to TF Holloman medical officials, streamlining the medical screening process enabled them to complete medical in-processing for up to a maximum of 700 Afghan evacuees per day. In contrast, medical officials from TF Liberty at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst completed medical in-processing for about 280 Afghan evacuees per day. Figure 7 provides an example of a medical in-processing examination room.

(U) Contractors from the base operations and support services contract took over medical in-processing responsibilities on October 12, 2021. According to TF Holloman medical officials, as of November 11, 2021, 100 percent of Afghan evacuees had completed medical in-processing.

(U) Access to All Vaccines Required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(U) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the DHS published a vaccine schedule, which listed 13 vaccines required by age group, for immigrants to the United States. Additionally, on September 5, 2021, the DHS issued a memorandum to establish medical

(U) requirements for Afghan evacuees.¹³ TF Holloman medical officials stated that the task force provided the 13 age-appropriate immunizations required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including the measles, mumps, and rubella; polio; COVID-19; and flu vaccines. The following table lists the 13 age-appropriate immunizations.

(U) Table. Required Immunizations for U.S. Immigration

| Required Immunizations | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Measles, Mumps, and Rubella | 8. Influenza |
| 2. Polio | 9. Pneumococcal Pneumonia |
| 3. Tetanus and Diphtheria | 10. Rotavirus |
| 4. Pertussis | 11. Hepatitis A |
| 5. Haemophilus Influenza Type B | 12. Meningococcal |
| 6. Hepatitis B | 13. COVID-19 |
| 7. Varicella | |

(U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) According to a TF Holloman medical official, the task force initially faced challenges obtaining and storing the vaccines. TF Holloman medical officials coordinated with the Air Force medical supplier and the 49th Medical Group at Holloman Air Force Base to procure sufficient vaccines and related supplies, such as needles, to administer the required vaccines. Additionally, TF Holloman medical officials initially had a challenge finding appropriate cold storage facilities for 5,000 vaccines. TF Holloman medical officials coordinated with Holloman Air Force Base civil engineering staff for additional vaccine storage space.

(U) The U.S. Northern Command tracked the four diseases that Afghan evacuees tested positive for at several U.S. installations housing Afghan evacuees. As of November 5, 2021, TF Holloman reported a 100 percent vaccination rate of eligible Afghan evacuees for measles, varicella, COVID-19, and polio.

(U) Contracted Medical Care

(U) During the audit team’s site visit, a combination of the TF Holloman medical officials and contracted medical personnel from the base operations and support services contract were providing acute care. TF Holloman medical officials stated that there were challenges with obtaining contracted medical personnel with New Mexico medical licenses. Because of medical licensing issues, TF Holloman medical officials had to provide acute care, a service that contracted medical personnel performed at other installations housing Afghan evacuees. A TF Holloman medical official stated that there was a shortage of licensed medical providers

¹³ (U) DHS Memorandum, “Medical Requirements for Operation Allies Welcome,” September 5, 2021.

(U) in the Alamogordo, New Mexico region. TF Holloman medical officials stated that the majority of acute care provided to Afghan evacuees was pharmacy services and urgent care, such as treating strep throat, skin conditions, and dental needs. According to a TF Holloman medical official, the U.S. Public Health Service, through the DHS, supported TF Holloman by providing behavioral health assistance for Afghan evacuees. Additionally, TF Holloman medical officials dispensed prescription medication and administered pregnancy tests.



(U) Figure 8. Pharmacy at TF Holloman
(U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) A TF Holloman medical official stated that the contractor began providing acute care alongside TF Holloman on November 2, 2021, and the task force personnel turned over acute care completely to the contractor at the end of November 2021. However, TF Holloman officials stated they never fully turned over the pharmacy and dental clinic to the contractor. Figure 8 shows the pharmacy at TF Holloman.

(U) Preventing Communicable Diseases

(U) On September 3, 2021, the U.S. Army North Commander ordered all personnel on installations supporting Operation Allies Welcome as well as all Afghan evacuees to wear a face mask on the installation. The U.S. Army North Commander further ordered all

Afghan evacuees to be tested for COVID-19 using rapid antigen testing upon arrival to the United States, and ordered additional testing for any Afghan evacuees showing symptoms of COVID-19.¹⁴ According to TF Holloman medical officials, the task force provided Afghan evacuees with education related to health and hygiene, including information on the prevention of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19. TF Holloman officials stated that face masks were available for Afghan evacuees. During our walkthrough, we observed Afghan evacuees wearing face masks while in the medical building and the emergent care tent, but not at other locations in the housing village.

(U) In accordance with the U.S. Army North Commander's requirement for COVID-19 testing, TF Holloman medical officials tested any Afghan evacuee who came to the acute care tent with symptoms of COVID-19. A TF Holloman medical official stated that TF Holloman medical officials developed procedures for the conduct of additional testing should a COVID-19 outbreak occur.

¹⁴ (U) Rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 uses a nasal swab to determine if a person has COVID-19.

(U) A TF Holloman medical official stated that, as of November 11, 2021, there had been only one COVID-19 case, two measles cases, two mumps cases, and five tuberculosis cases since TF Holloman operations began. In addition to testing for COVID-19 and vaccinating Afghan evacuees for these diseases upon arrival at Holloman Air Force Base, TF Holloman medical officials attributed the low case numbers to effective quarantine procedures. TF Holloman medical officials stated that when the task force learned of any potential case of a communicable disease within the Afghan evacuee population, the task force placed the individual and their family members in a quarantine tent.

(U) Physical Security and Accountability Practices

(CUI) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TF Holloman also developed solutions to many potential security problems, paying attention to how the layout of the village affected safety and security. For example, TF Holloman ensured the physical separation of single males from the rest of the population by providing designated housing and recreation facilities and constructing half walls within the male-only housing areas to ensure visibility.

(U) TF Holloman officials stated the task force tracked the number of Afghan evacuees that chose to leave the installation voluntarily and withdraw from the formal resettlement process. The DOS led the withdrawal process for Afghan evacuees that chose to withdraw from the resettlement process. Accountability of Afghan evacuees centered on a wristband system tied to both the DOS Hummingbird system and TF Holloman housing assignments. TF Holloman officials responsible for overseeing security, accountability, and housing assignments were co-located within the mayor’s cell in the village.

(U) Physical Security

(CUI) [REDACTED]

(CUI) [Redacted text block]

(CUI) [Redacted text block]

(CUI) TF Holloman security officials stated that, [Redacted text block]

(CUI) [Redacted text block]

(U) Voluntary Departures Before Completing the Resettlement Process

(U) A TF Holloman official stated that, in the interest of accountability, the task force tracked the number of Afghan evacuees who chose to depart the village without completing the formal resettlement process. However, TF Holloman did not conduct any analysis on the causes of these voluntary departures. A TF Holloman official stated that DOS representatives counseled Afghan evacuees who chose to forego the formal resettlement process, including the identification of sponsors and travel arrangement assistance from co-located non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. As of January 26, 2022, all 7,221 Afghan evacuees had departed Holloman Air Force Base. Of those, 6,450 had completed the resettlement process and 771 departed without completing the resettlement process.

(U) Accountability of Afghan Evacuees

(U) Upon in-processing at the village, each Afghan evacuee was provided a wristband with their name, their Hummingbird number, and an indicator of whether the evacuee was a member of a family. For example, “2/8” would indicate that person was the second of eight family members with that Hummingbird number. The color-coded wristband system made it easier to identify Afghan evacuees attempting to access off-limits facilities, such as single males attempting to enter areas designated for single females and families, or minors entering the tent for single males.

(U) Contractor personnel were responsible for documenting each Afghan evacuee housing location according to assigned wristband number and for replacing any lost wristbands. According to a TF Holloman official, contractor personnel used this information to conduct a census and sampled 10 percent of the Afghan evacuee population every day. This resulted in a complete census every 10 days.

(U) Lines of Communication

(U) A team of DoD advisors with expertise in issues related to culture and gender supported the task force’s efforts to ensure vulnerable populations were considered in task force decisions. Additionally, TF Holloman communicated with the Afghan evacuee population through weekly meetings.

(U) Cultural Advisory Team

(U) To support Afghan evacuees—particularly vulnerable populations of women, children, and the elderly—TF Holloman officials employed a team of DoD cultural and gender advisors. Specifically, TF Holloman used a female Muslim chaplain as a cultural advisor to guide women’s engagement. The cultural advisor led the women’s meetings, directed recreational activities, and informed TF Holloman officials of any issues facing the Afghan evacuee population. In addition, two DoD civilian gender advisors also led women’s meetings and built relationships with women to ensure sustainment conditions met gender-specific needs.

(U) For example, a gender advisor recommended that the task force provide pregnancy tests as a personal care item available in the distribution tent, rather than only in the medical tent. This enabled female Afghan evacuees to obtain pregnancy tests in relative privacy and, in turn, medical personnel to better address prenatal care due to earlier confirmation of pregnancy. The cultural advisor provided guidance to the task force regarding the standard medical practice of administering mandatory pregnancy tests for all females, including teenagers, before receiving vaccinations. The cultural advisor stated that she discussed ways to talk to the parents of female Afghan evacuee minors about mandatory pregnancy testing with increased sensitivity so that medical personnel could avoid any suggestion of impropriety.

(U) In addition to the cultural and gender advisors, TF Holloman officials requested and received former Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel to provide cultural knowledge.¹⁵ TF Holloman officials also requested and received other military personnel with Provincial Reconstruction Team experience, including the TF Holloman governor.¹⁶ A TF Holloman official stated that the 30 to 40 former Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands and Provincial Reconstruction Team personnel provided cultural and linguistic knowledge that was beneficial for working with the Afghan evacuees. Furthermore, military linguists, trained in the Dari and Pashto languages, worked with the task force. A TF Holloman official stated that linguists, along with the other members of the cultural advisory team, notified TF Holloman officials about concerns within the Afghan evacuee population, such as domestic violence issues.

(U) Afghan Evacuee Perceptions

(U) During our site visit, we met with Afghan evacuees in two different venues to hear their thoughts regarding the TF Holloman-provided housing, medical, and security within the village. First, we walked through the village and chose 25 Afghan evacuees at random to talk with about TF Holloman living conditions. Specifically, we met with six groups of Afghan evacuees—including groups of two, three, and seven men; two women; a party of six adolescents, both male and female; and a five-member family group of mixed ages and genders. We spoke to the Afghan evacuees with the assistance of a contracted translator and without the presence of any task force personnel to encourage open communication. The Afghan evacuees stated that they felt happy, comfortable, and safe. For example, an Afghan woman stated that she was at Holloman Air Force Base alone because most of her family was still in Afghanistan. She stated that she was not afraid to walk around by herself at night because she felt safe. Afghan evacuees also stated that initially the food from the dining facility was not preferable but had since improved.

(U) Second, on November 10, 2021, the audit team attended a mixed-gender meeting, and afterwards took questions and comments from Afghan evacuees. Afghan evacuee participants expressed concern for family and friends still in Afghanistan and requested updates on the status of their own immigration cases. TF Holloman officials told the Afghan evacuees that the task force understood the evacuees' frustration with the lack of clarity regarding the resettlement process. TF Holloman officials explained to the evacuees that the task force was responsible for housing, feeding, and securing Afghan evacuees, while the resettlement process was the responsibility of the DOS. Therefore, TF Holloman officials were unable to

¹⁵ (U) In 2009, the DoD created the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program to develop a group of experts specializing in the language, culture, processes, and challenges facing Afghanistan and Pakistan. To create this group of regional experts, Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel received extensive cultural and language training. In 2020, the DoD closed the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program, but trained former Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel are still serving in the military and temporarily transferred to TF Holloman.

¹⁶ (U) Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan were 50- to 100-person interagency teams composed of a security force, medical and logistics components, a civil affairs team, command and control elements, and representatives from the DOS and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The mission of Provincial Reconstruction Teams was to improve security and facilitate reconstruction and development in the Afghan provinces.

(U) provide Afghan evacuees with information regarding their resettlement dates or details of their relocation but referred them to DOS officials on site. Figure 9 shows the inside of a multipurpose tent arranged for the mixed-gender meeting.



(U) Figure 9. Multipurpose Tent Arranged for a Mixed-Gender Meeting
(U) Source: The DoD OIG.

(U) Community Meetings

(U) The TF Holloman governor, with assistance from the gender and cultural advisors, held meetings to discuss upcoming events and important information with Afghan evacuees. The task force held meetings for both genders and for only women. For example, during one meeting, the task force organized an event for children that included activities and a fire truck on display. The task force used another meeting to notify the Afghan evacuees that the task force had dedicated a walking path for Afghan evacuees to use to avoid using a heavily trafficked road around the village.

(U) Limiting Factors of Local Economy

(U) TF Holloman officials stated that the local economy around Alamogordo, New Mexico, did not have a sufficient labor pool, an adequate supply of materials, or appropriate hospital space to meet TF Holloman's needs. The population of Alamogordo is about 33,000, and the closest large cities with additional resources are El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico, which are 90 miles and 60 miles away, respectively. In addition, Fort Bliss, Texas, a neighboring U.S. installation also supporting Operation Allies Welcome, was drawing upon El Paso's resources to support the 6,233 Afghan evacuees housed at Fort Bliss at the time of our site visit in November 2021, putting further demands on the El Paso economy.

(U) TF Holloman officials faced staffing challenges due to a limited supply of qualified personnel in the immediate Alamogordo area. For example, the Alamogordo area did not have enough medical staff licensed in New Mexico to fulfill the acute care requirements of TF Holloman. Contracted medical personnel without a New Mexico medical license could perform physicals for medical in-processing, but they could not treat patients. Therefore, Air Force medical team members initially performed all acute care.¹⁷

(U) Furthermore, Alamogordo had one hospital with a 25-bed capacity and limited ability to provide comprehensive medical care. When Afghan evacuees required medical care beyond what was available in the village or at the Alamogordo hospital, TF Holloman personnel drove patients to El Paso or Las Cruces. TF Holloman personnel used task force vehicles and only used ambulances in emergencies.

¹⁷ (U) Military medical personnel are able to practice medicine in any state so long as they have a current license, regardless of which state issued the license, and are performing authorized duties for the DoD.

(U) According to TF Holloman officials, the contractor also reported labor shortages in food services positions as well as food shortages, but neither affected the contractor's ability to provide three meals per day to each Afghan evacuee. Additionally, a TF Holloman official stated that the limited supply of materials in the local area, such as plywood, forced modifications to the initial plans for housing tent partitions. TF Holloman personnel had to travel throughout southern New Mexico and the El Paso area to purchase supplies unavailable near Holloman Air Force Base.

(U) Financial Costs of Task Force Holloman Operations

(U) In an August 19, 2021 memorandum, the DoD Deputy Comptroller established cost reporting requirements and procedures for DoD Components supporting the relocation effort.¹⁸ The Deputy Comptroller required DoD Components to submit weekly flash reports of all direct and reimbursable costs associated with the relocation of Afghan evacuees and directed the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to provide additional reporting instructions to DoD Components. The Deputy Comptroller also stated that the DoD Financial Management Regulation provided instruction on reporting the cost of contingency operations.¹⁹

(U) As of January 24, 2022, TF Holloman reported that the total cost of its support to Operation Allies Welcome was \$317 million. TF Holloman funding officials forecasted that the task force would continue to need about \$80 million per month in Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) funds for the base operations and support services contract, to run the Afghan evacuee village.²⁰

(U) We are providing this management advisory for information and use. This advisory identifies the challenges and successes identified during our site visit to TF Holloman located at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. We provided this information to the TF Holloman Commander during an exit conference at TF Holloman on November 12, 2021.

(U) The interagency partners, as well as the commands directly and indirectly responsible for the relocation of Afghan evacuees, should read this advisory to be aware of the challenges and opportunities for improvement regarding the in-processing, sustainment and physical security support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The DoD OIG will issue additional management advisories for each site visited to the appropriate organizations responsible for the Afghan relocation effort for their review and use.

¹⁸ (U) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, "DoD Support to the Department of State for Afghan Special Immigration Visa (SIV) Applicants," August 19, 2021.

¹⁹ (U) DoD Regulation 7000.14-R, "DoD Financial Regulation," volume 12, chapter 23.

²⁰ (U) OHDACA funds DoD humanitarian assistance activities that primarily benefit civilian populations. The DoD uses OHDACA-funded activities to relieve human suffering and may support construction for humanitarian purposes in countries other than the United States; however, the DoD allowed TF Holloman to use OHDACA funding to support humanitarian activities in the United States.

(U) We considered management's comments on a discussion draft copy of this management advisory when preparing this final memorandum. A written response is not required. If you have any questions, please contact me at [REDACTED]



Richard B. Vasquez
Assistant Inspector General for Audit
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cc:
Commander, Task Force Holloman

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