



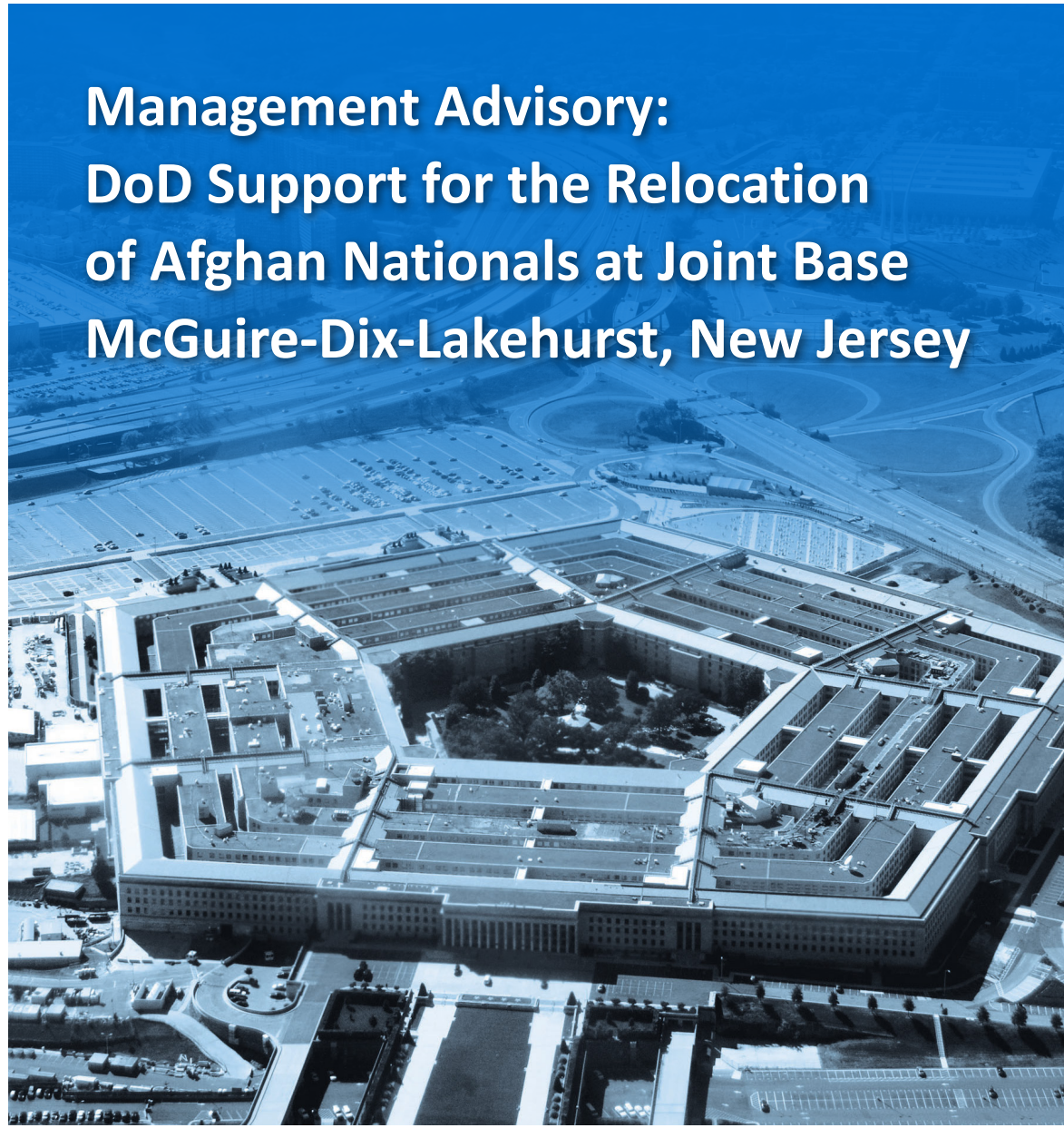
INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

FEBRUARY 2, 2022



Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey







**INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
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February 2, 2022

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 ARMY
AUDITOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Management Advisory: DoD Support for the Relocation of Afghan Nationals
at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey (Report No. DODIG-2022-059)

The purpose of this management advisory is to provide officials responsible for the 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) Liberty at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL), New Jersey. The audit team visited TF Liberty from October 4 through 8, 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.

Our review of TF Liberty operations at JB MDL was conducted 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 has adequately planned and provided support for the relocation of Afghan evacuees. The audit team visited JB MDL to review housing and other facilities, security, medical care, and costs associated with this effort.²

Operation Allies Refuge

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 process of completing their Special Immigrant Visa applications.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.

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

² TF Liberty is supported by DoD, interagency, and non-governmental organization personnel. However, for the purpose of this report, we refer to TF Liberty personnel as DoD personnel.

³ 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.

Due to that employment, some Afghans, their families, and close friends, faced ongoing and serious 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-provided support in the form of temporary housing, sustainment, and other support at suitable DoD facilities both within and outside the continental United States.⁴

Operation Allies Welcome

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.

DoD Roles and Responsibilities Supporting Operation Allies Welcome

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 December 31, 2021, there were five U.S.-based military installations, including JB MDL, supporting the relocation of Afghan evacuees under Operation Allies Welcome.⁶

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Operations and Task Force Liberty

JB MDL is home to Air Force, Navy, and Army operations, including the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, as well as offices for the DHS and the Department of Justice. JB MDL is located an hour away from the Philadelphia International Airport, which was one of the primary airports in the United States receiving inbound Afghan evacuees from overseas locations.

⁴ The Afghanistan Coordination Task Force is led by the DOS and 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 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 The five locations were Fort Pickett, Virginia; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; JB MDL, New Jersey; and Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Between November 17, 2021, and December 30, 2021, the final Afghan evacuees were processed through Fort Lee, Virginia; Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; and Fort Bliss, Texas, and resettled.

The U.S. Northern Command formed TF Liberty on August 21, 2021, to support Operation Allies Welcome at JB MDL with the mission to safely receive, house, support, and prepare Afghan evacuees for movement to their final resettlement location. TF Liberty was commanded by an Air Force major general and composed of Airmen and DoD civilians, as well as personnel from the DHS, the DOS, and non-governmental organizations providing support to Afghan evacuees.

TF Liberty officials stated that when the task force was first established, the U.S. Northern Command anticipated housing 3,500 Afghan evacuees at JB MDL; however, by September 1, 2021, TF Liberty expanded its capacity to accommodate 13,000 Afghan evacuees. TF Liberty operations were divided into three villages to support the growing number of arrivals. Villages 1 and 2 used existing dormitories and dining facilities. A base operations support services contractor erected Village 3 with tents for housing, dining, and medical support.⁷

According to a TF Liberty official, as of mid-November 2021, TF Liberty had received a cumulative total of 13,889 Afghan evacuees and out-processed 1,914 to resettlement locations. In October 2021, the DHS published a consolidation plan for the U.S. installations housing Afghan evacuees. The DHS memorandum listed JB MDL as the last installation to be closed but did not give an estimated timeframe for closure. TF Liberty officials anticipated that as other installations supporting the relocation of Afghan evacuees close, remaining Afghan evacuees waiting for resettlement may be moved to JB MDL.

Afghan Evacuee In-Processing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

There were no Afghan evacuees in-processed during the audit team's site visit; however, TF Liberty officials walked the audit team through the process and through a tour of the facilities. According to TF Liberty officials, upon arrival at JB MDL, Afghan evacuees were in-processed at the Joint Reception Center, where snacks, water, and baby supplies were available to mitigate the stress of waiting. TF Liberty officials further explained that they issued each Afghan evacuee a wristband with a unique identification number and non-governmental organization staff entered biographical information into Hummingbird.⁸ TF Liberty officials responsible for housing stated that they gave Afghan families their initial room assignment and took a family photo, both of which were also input into Hummingbird. Finally, Afghan evacuees received a 3-day supply of linens, toiletries, and other hygiene items (including diapers and wipes for families with infants). Additional quantities of linens, toiletries, and other hygiene items were available in assigned living areas.

⁷ The Air Force Contract Augmentation Program provides base operations support services, including engineering design, construction, food service, lodging, and laundry.

⁸ 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.

Task Force Liberty Successes and Challenges

From October 4 through 8, 2021, the audit team conducted a site visit to JB MDL to observe the facility conditions, medical screening, treatment of Afghan evacuees, and security processes related to TF Liberty. We identified several aspects of TF Liberty operations that fulfilled its responsibilities for providing temporary housing and support to Afghan evacuees. Specifically, TF Liberty provided:

- housing and sustainment support, including living space, food, and water;
- medical care including access to vaccines, procedures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (such as coronavirus disease-2019 [COVID-19]), and obstetric-gynecological and pediatric care;
- physical security and accountability measures; and
- lines of communication with and opportunities to involve Afghan evacuees in the TF Liberty community.

However, the audit team also identified potential procedural obstacles for law enforcement officers investigating potential criminal activity and challenges for other security personnel ensuring only those with proper credentials could access the villages. TF Liberty officials addressed both challenges to improve the process of investigating possible crimes and the accountability of visitors within the TF Liberty villages while the audit team was on site.

Housing and Sustainment Support

TF Liberty officials stated that operations on JB MDL expanded incrementally as the Afghan evacuee population grew, beginning with Villages 1 and 2 that consisted of existing dormitories. Once these villages reached full capacity, TF Liberty used Village 3. Village 3 consisted of dormitory tents, as well as other support activity tents. All three villages included facilities for housing; dining; donated goods distribution; religious activities; and morale, welfare, and recreation. Additionally, each village had a TF Liberty mayor responsible for public safety and care of Afghan evacuees. There were two TF Liberty governors above the mayors who coordinated operations across the villages.⁹ The TF Liberty governors and mayors were supported by cultural advisors, and TF Liberty officials stated that cultural considerations were a part of task force decisions, including housing arrangements.

Housing

The TF Liberty Commander stated the task force had 3 weeks to prepare for 13,000 Afghan evacuees. As of November 19, 2021, TF Liberty housed 11,217 Afghan evacuees—2,355 in Village 1; 2,102 in Village 2; and 6,760 in Village 3.

⁹ The TF Liberty mayors and governors were U.S. military personnel. TF Liberty mayors operated out of offices known as “mayors’ cells.” The mayor’s cells were open throughout the day to directly address the sustainment needs of Afghan evacuees, such as management of donated items, requests to move dormitory locations, and response to safety incidents.

The dormitory rooms in Villages 1 and 2 accommodated four people per room. TF Liberty officials stated that families were housed together. The rooms did not have private bathrooms, but each floor had gender-segregated restroom facilities with toilets, sinks, and showers. One dormitory building was designated for single female heads of household, new mothers and their immediate family, unaccompanied children, and women who self-reported as victims of domestic violence. A TF Liberty official stated that the building was intended to be a safe space for women—the only men allowed entry were the fathers of newborns. Figure 1 provides examples of Village 2 accommodations.



The 11 dormitory tents in Village 3 had been insulated for winter weather conditions. The tents had also been transformed from open bay living areas into rooms with walls, creating private spaces of varying sizes designed to house between four and eight people. Additionally, one tent housed only single males.

Attached to each dormitory tent was a gender-segregated restroom facility with 15 toilets and 12 shower stalls. Figure 2 shows a restroom facility in Village 3.



Figure 2. Village 3 Restroom Tent

Note: This is the male restroom facility; male and female restroom facilities were identical.

Source: The DoD OIG.

To address the cultural preferences of Afghan evacuees, TF Liberty officials adapted the Village 3 tents. TF Liberty officials stated that they originally arranged the first tents in Village 3 in an open bay layout with bunk beds arranged in rows, intended to maximize the number of beds while ensuring ease of ingress and egress. However, Afghan families made private family areas by moving bunk beds and using blankets to construct walls, which created an additional demand for both beds and blankets. TF Liberty personnel then provided Afghan evacuees with additional sheets to be used as walls instead of the blankets needed for warmth. TF Liberty officials stated that when it became apparent that these improvised walls did not adequately prevent conflict between families over perceived breaches of privacy, TF Liberty acquired pole and drape walls, which could be moved to create family areas of varying sizes. In October 2021, TF Liberty created fully private rooms constructed from wood and drywall within the tents.

Figure 3 provides examples of housing facilities in Village 3, as of October 2021.



Figure 3. Village 3 Tent and Private Space Within the Tent
Source: The DoD OIG.

Food and Water

Each village had a dining facility equipped with hand washing stations. Dining facilities offered hot halal meals three times per day, as well as a continuous supply of ready-made snacks.¹⁰ Pallets of water bottles were available throughout the villages.

Donations

Each village had donated clothing available for Afghan evacuees. TF Liberty officials stated that non-profit organizations solicited donations from the surrounding communities and TF Liberty officials performed inventory management and restocking daily. However, the nature of community-based donations presented planning and supply issues for TF Liberty officials. Specifically, TF Liberty officials explained that they had no control over items the local community donated. To alleviate this uncertainty, TF Liberty also used the base operations support services contract to purchase needed items, such as shoes and boots.

Recreation

TF Liberty officials stated that providing Afghan evacuees with adequate opportunities for recreation was a priority. In addition to open outdoor space in each village and a pre-existing children's playground near Village 3, a gym located in Village 1 was available for use by all Afghan evacuees. The gym had separate areas for men and women and daily designated times during which the entire gym was open for women only. A TF Liberty official stated that, on average, more than 70 women used the gym during the daily women's-only time. Throughout the day, Afghan evacuees served as volunteer instructors for various fitness classes. According to a TF Liberty official, there were also designated mother and child play periods in the gym that were popular. Since our site visit, TF Liberty officials stated that they constructed a walking path connecting all three villages and multipurpose spaces in each village for safer access to indoor activities in anticipation of colder weather.

¹⁰ "Halal" is Arabic for "permissible" and indicates that food was prepared in accordance with Islamic law.

TF Liberty officials stated that they occasionally hosted special events, such as a talent show, to improve the morale of Afghan evacuees, and an Afghan group from the local community hosted an outdoor dance party, with a private women-only section of the dance floor as requested by female Afghan evacuees. Another local group hosted a kebab night for Afghan evacuees and TF Liberty personnel.

Additionally, TF Liberty provided space for religious activities. Buildings in Villages 1 and 2 and a tent in Village 3 housed prayer rooms. The prayer rooms in Villages 1 and 2 had separate areas for men and women. A TF Liberty official stated that as of December 10, 2021, the task force was working to create similar gender-segregated prayer areas in Village 3.

Medical Care

TF Liberty provided medical care to Afghan evacuees including medical in-processing and emergent care (acute care). The U.S. Northern Command directed a Navy Expeditionary Medical Team to complete the medical in-processing of Afghan evacuees, including performing physicals, collecting lab draws, and administering vaccines. All acute care services were funded under the base operations support services contract and included:

- issuing medication,
- administering x-rays,
- supplying specialized care, and
- providing ambulance services.

As of January 4, 2022, TF Liberty had completed medical in-processing for 92 percent of Afghan evacuees. According to a Navy Medical Team official, on October 20, 2021, medical in-processing would be incorporated into the base operations support services contract. Figure 4 is an example of a medical in-processing examination room.



Figure 4. Medical In-Processing Examination Room
Source: The DoD OIG.

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

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a vaccine schedule, which listed 13 vaccines. Additionally, on September 5, 2021, the DHS issued a memorandum to establish medical requirements for Afghan evacuees.¹¹ TF Liberty personnel stated that they provided the 13 vaccines required by the DHS, including the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella; polio; COVID-19; and influenza vaccines. According to a Navy Medical Team official, the Navy Medical Team had sufficient vaccine supplies to administer the appropriate vaccines. The following table provides the list of the 13 immunizations.

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	

Source: The DoD OIG.

The U.S. Northern Command tracked the four diseases that Afghan evacuees have tested positive for at several U.S. installations housing Afghan evacuees. As of October 21, 2021, the following percentages of eligible Afghan evacuees at TF Liberty had received the vaccines for those four diseases:

- Measles–100 percent
- Varicella–100 percent
- COVID-19–100 percent
- Polio–65 percent

Contracted Acute Medical Care

A TF Liberty official stated that there were approximately 500 contractor personnel providing acute medical care to the Afghan evacuee population at JB MDL. Contracted medical personnel provided behavioral health services, pharmaceutical services, and support services, such as x-rays and negative pressure tents for isolation. Additionally, TF Liberty officials stated that each Afghan evacuee was given a temporary insurance card in case they required a higher level of care off-base.

¹¹ DHS Memorandum, “Medical Requirements for Operation Allies Welcome,” September 5, 2021.

Prevention of Communicable Disease Spread

According to TF Liberty officials, as of October 6, 2021, JB MDL had one active tuberculosis case and eight latent cases (cases that cannot spread). TF Liberty officials stated that the one active case was moved off-base to a hospital for treatment. As of November 19, 2021, there had been five COVID-19 cases reported. Figure 5 shows one isolation tent, reserved for any future patients with COVID-19.



Physical Security and Accountability

TF Liberty security forces officials established physical security to keep Afghan evacuees safe and to de-escalate any situation as it happened. TF Liberty officials also established several processes to help ensure accountability of Afghan evacuees, including tracking voluntary departures and conducting an accountability census in each dormitory and tent weekly using the assigned wristband numbers. TF Liberty security forces officials also introduced a badging system to help ensure only authorized officials had access to the villages.

Physical Security

TF Liberty security forces officials established a security presence in all three villages. The audit team observed the first and second layers of security within each village. The first layer consisted of a system of roving unarmed “safety patrols,” pairs of TF Liberty enlisted personnel, identified by their yellow vests, who observed and reported potential criminal activities. The second layer consisted of unarmed Air Force security forces personnel, identified by their berets and stationed around the three villages, who conducted perimeter security and patrolled each village.

TF Liberty security forces officials stated that the third layer of security was the 87th Air Base Wing, 87th Security Forces Squadron members, permanently assigned to JB MDL, who provided physical security for all of JB MDL. TF Liberty security forces were also embedded with the 87th Security Forces Squadron at the Base Defense Operations Center. TF Liberty officials further stated that when necessary, 87th Security Forces Squadron members from the Base Defense Operations Center could be called to the villages, generate police reports, file charges against Afghan evacuees, and issue citations and court dates.

According to the TF Liberty Force Protection Concept of Operations, Federal law enforcement officers from the DHS, including Federal Air Marshals and uniformed officers from the DHS Security Investigative Unit and the Federal Protective Service, were also present in the villages. These law enforcement officers were the primary authority for determining whether criminal activity had occurred or if an arrest was warranted. The TF Liberty Force Protection Concept of Operations stated that DHS law enforcement officers ultimately would make the decision if an arrest was warranted, with the assistance of the TF Liberty officials.

Challenges Investigating Reported Potential Crimes

The audit team received multiple reports from TF Liberty officials of perceived procedural barriers to military and Federal law enforcement officers investigating alleged crimes in the villages, including potential incidents of domestic violence. In general, TF Liberty officials were concerned that the mayors' cells did not notify law enforcement officers of incidents that should require a law enforcement decision related to arrests or charges.

The audit team immediately informed the TF Liberty Chief of Staff of this concern. The TF Liberty Chief of Staff stated the task force legal advisors informed her of the concern that same day. The Chief of Staff stated she would advise the TF Liberty Commander and Deputy Commander on the concern. TF Liberty leadership stated that they were concerned that delaying notification further delayed law enforcement determination to investigate potential crimes and that this delay could affect the safety and legal rights of both Afghan evacuees and task force personnel and delay the legal process.

The day after the audit team informed the TF Liberty Chief of Staff, TF Liberty leadership and their legal advisors held the first of what they planned to be weekly meetings between TF Liberty personnel responsible for the housing and sustainment of Afghan evacuees and TF Liberty security forces officials responsible for law enforcement within the villages. The audit team attended the meeting, which addressed questions from TF Liberty personnel. TF Liberty officials stated that they would formally document a consistent process by which a law enforcement response would be initiated when a potential crime is reported. A TF Liberty official stated that task force personnel continued to hold weekly meetings with TF Liberty housing and security officials on this matter. The audit team viewed this as a step towards addressing the matter.

In addition, as of November 19, 2021, TF Liberty security forces officials had revised their concept of operations documentation to clarify incident reporting procedures for personnel from the mayors' cells. Specifically, the revised concept of operations documentation required TF Liberty security forces personnel and DHS law enforcement officials to respond to all incidents reported in the villages. Additionally, the documentation stated that DHS law enforcement officials were the primary authorities to determine whether to arrest or charge.

Voluntary Departures from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Before Completing Processing

The DHS and the DOS were responsible for Afghan evacuees' movement from JB MDL to a final resettlement location. TF Liberty provided physical space for U.S. Government agencies and non-governmental organizations, such as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (under the DHS) and the International Organization for Migration (working with the DOS), to assist Afghan evacuees at JB MDL. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services provided Afghan evacuees with employment authorization documentation, and the International Organization for Migration coordinated travel arrangements for final resettlement. However, TF Liberty officials stated that resettlement was a time-consuming process, which they acknowledged was a source of frustration for Afghan evacuees. Specifically, TF Liberty officials stated that Afghan evacuees were upset that neither TF Liberty nor DOS officials could provide a date or location for their final resettlement.

According to TF Liberty officials, Afghan evacuees were able to leave the installation and embark on a resettlement process on their own. As of November 20, 2021, 3,068 Afghan evacuees had departed JB MDL: 1,154 departed voluntarily and 1,914 had completed the resettlement process.

Accountability of Afghan Evacuees

According to TF Liberty officials, the DOS Hummingbird system and hard copy or electronic village maps were used to track room assignments for Afghan evacuees. The maps indicated room assignments according to the individually assigned wristband numbers. TF Liberty officials stated that Afghan evacuees could request to be reassigned to be closer to family or friends or for any other reason by coordinating with TF Liberty officials. However, TF Liberty officials stated that Afghan evacuees did not consistently notify the task force of their intent to move to a different room and instead relocated without reporting the change.

Therefore, to ensure accountability and accurate billeting maps, TF Liberty officials stated that they conducted a weekly census in the villages to verify the individuals staying in each room matched information from the billeting map. TF Liberty officials also used the census to identify any vacancies in lodging that may not have matched the billeting plan due to Afghan evacuees switching rooms or combining with other families.

Access to Liberty Village

At the start of our site visit on October 4, 2021, TF Liberty physical security officials did not provide the audit team with visitor's badges or any other form of identification stating that the team was authorized to access the villages; yet, the audit team entered one of the villages, walking past the guarded entrance unescorted and without badges. The audit team informed a TF Liberty official of our observation. TF Liberty physical security officials issued the audit team visitor badges and logged our names, organization, and badge numbers on a form. A TF Liberty official stated that they would enforce badging of all visitors to ensure unauthorized personnel did not enter the villages. Enforcement of the badge policy is included in the updated TF Liberty Force Protection Concept of Operations received by the audit team on November 16, 2021.

Communication and Involvement of Afghan Evacuees

According to the TF Liberty Operations Officer, Afghan evacuee engagement was an important element of TF Liberty operations. A TF Liberty official stated that TF Liberty's ability to communicate with Afghan evacuees and help them acclimate to life in the United States was key to the success of Operation Allies Welcome. As part of this effort, TF Liberty engaged a team of cultural advisors, empowered Afghan evacuees to volunteer to serve their community at JB MDL, and opened lines of communication throughout the Afghan evacuee population.

Cultural Advisory Team

TF Liberty leadership requested military personnel who had served in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program, as well as other military personnel with Afghanistan experience or Afghan heritage, to serve as cultural advisors and bridge the cultural gap between Afghan evacuees and TF Liberty officials.¹² TF Liberty officials stated that Villages 1 and 2 each had four to six Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel, while Village 3 had six to eight Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel. Additionally, TF Liberty leadership requested and received a lead cultural advisor from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force–International Affairs. TF Liberty officials stated that the lead cultural advisor provided guidance to TF Liberty officials on Afghan culture to help with decision-making and interactions with Afghan evacuees. A cultural advisor and a translator responded to incidents within the villages, and they translated for both TF Liberty officials and Afghan evacuees, and provided appropriate cultural context for the situation and dispute resolution. Additionally, a TF Liberty official stated that all arriving TF Liberty officials received basic Afghan cultural training and a card with useful phrases in Dari, such as “thank you” and “hello.”

¹² 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 Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands personnel are still serving in the military and thus were able to be temporarily transferred to TF Liberty.

Involvement of Afghan Evacuees

TF Liberty officials partnered with Afghan evacuees to establish a volunteer program that enabled Afghan evacuees to serve their community at JB MDL. A TF Liberty official stated that, for example, an Afghan evacuee with culinary experience volunteered with the dining facility staff to advise on Afghan cuisine. A group of female Afghan evacuees requested and received space from TF Liberty to establish a beauty salon, which TF Liberty officials stated was patronized by female Afghan evacuees. Male Afghan evacuees also volunteered to operate a barbershop. TF Liberty officials stated that Afghan evacuees also volunteered to teach English to other Afghan evacuees and run fitness classes. According to TF Liberty officials, some Afghan evacuees served as voluntary dormitory and tent managers, acting as leaders in their immediate living space and disseminating information received from task force leadership—such as new safety guidance or housing rules—throughout their building or tent.

Communication With the Afghan Evacuee Population

In addition to communicating through the dormitory and tent managers, TF Liberty officials instituted weekly town hall meetings to promote communication between Afghan evacuees and TF Liberty officials. Representatives from TF Liberty and non-governmental organizations shared information with and responded to questions from Afghan evacuees. According to a TF Liberty official, the TF Liberty Strategic Communications office prepared a script each week that was used during town hall meetings at each of the three villages to ensure that each village received the same messages. For example, at the October 7, 2021 town hall meeting, TF Liberty officials provided information about prenatal care and access to cell phones. Then, a representative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided information about Hepatitis A prevention, and a representative from the International Organization for Migration presented information on work authorization documentation.

Financial Costs of Task Force Liberty Operations

In an August 19, 2021 memorandum, the DoD Deputy Comptroller established cost reporting requirements and procedures for DoD components supporting the relocation effort.¹³ 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.¹⁴

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ DoD Regulation 7000.14-R, “DoD Financial Regulation,” volume 12, chapter 23.

As of January 5, 2022, a TF Liberty finance official reported the total cost of its support to Operation Allies Welcome as \$626 million. The JB MDL Air Force installation management wing had spent \$1.5 million on items supporting the TF Liberty mission, such as office supplies, flashlights, safety vests, and winterization efforts. The remaining costs (\$625 million) were incurred under the base operations support services contract.

We are providing this management advisory for information and use. This advisory identifies the challenges and successes identified during our site visit to TF Liberty located at JB MDL, New Jersey. We provided this information to the TF Liberty Commander during an exit conference at JB MDL on October 8, 2021.

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.

We considered management's comments on a discussion draft copy of this 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 Liberty



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