

THE SUMMER 2019

# WASTE REPORT!



**THE LATEST NEWS ON GOVERNMENT WASTE!**

**"GREEN GROWTH" IN PERU!**

**\$10,000,000**



**FROG MATING CALLS!**

**\$466,991**



**INCREASING TRUST IN TUNISIAN POLITICS!**

**\$2,000,000**



**ABANDONED MENTAL HOSPITALS!**

**\$2,120,040,355**

## The federal government wasted Americans' tax dollars as it...

- Attempted to increase trust between Tunisian political parties and citizens (State) ..... \$2,000,000
- Converted an abandoned mental hospital into DHS HQ (GSA and DHS) ..... \$2,120,040,355.35
- Supported “Green Growth” in Peru (USAID) ..... \$10,000,000
- Fixed vehicles New York City falsely claimed Superstorm Sandy damaged (FEMA) ..... \$5,303,624
- Increased the capacity of the Pakistani film industry (State) ..... \$100,000
- Paid out billions from Medicare in improper payments (CMS) ..... \$48,000,000,000
- Taught English and IT skills at Madrassas (State) ..... \$150,000
- Studied frog mating calls in Panama (NSF) ..... \$466,991
- Paid for Google Scholar searches in Hawaii (NSF, NOAA, USFS, DOI, NASA) ..... \$51,722,107
- Paid for property confiscated in Afghanistan by the ANDSF (USACE) ..... \$325,485

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**TAXPAYER DOLLARS WASTED: \$50,190,108,562.35**

## MR. SMITH GOES TO TUNIS

***State is spending up to \$2,000,000.00 to strengthen democracy in Tunisia***

Tunisia gained its independence in 1956 from France, after which autocrat Habib Bourguiba governed the country from 1957 to 1987, before being removed in a bloodless coup led by another autocrat, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.<sup>1</sup> During the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, Ben Ali was exiled to Saudi Arabia.<sup>2</sup> But despite the ouster of Ben Ali, Tunisia has never had strong republican roots. Nevertheless, the State Department believes it should use your tax dollars to tinker with the civic processes in a culture where self-determination has not been the norm. That is why it is spending up to **\$2 million “to strengthen democratic institutions and processes in Tunisia by increasing trust between political parties and citizens.”**<sup>3</sup>

### **Support for Political Parties at Home and Abroad**

Toward this end, the grantee will be responsible for goals including **helping the Tunisian political parties build “responsive” party platforms and “develop[ing] mechanisms for citizens and selected civil society organizations to hold political parties accountable for their performance, behavior, and use of resources.”**<sup>4</sup> While the State Department is paying to try to get Tunisians to have faith in their political parties, American taxpayers have largely lost faith in the two major American political parties.

According to Gallup data, since roughly 2005, a majority of Americans have believed the two major U.S. political parties are doing an inadequate job.<sup>5</sup>

Despite established party platforms and regular elections in which citizens and organizations can hold politicians and parties accountable, Americans are clearly lacking faith in our political parties. What makes the State Department believe Tunisians will have faith in theirs if they adopt American characteristics when even Americans lack faith in the two parties?

### **Nation-Building Does Not Work**

The U.S. taxpayer has funded many attempts at nation-building in recent years – in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, just to name a few. In each instance, U.S. blood and treasure have been spent in an ultimately failed effort to remake countries in our image. Do not misread us – the U.S. political system is far and away the best in the world, with more than 200 years of bloodless transfers of power to back it up. But that does not mean we can simply impose our Jeffersonian ideals on other countries.

According to the State Department, the U.S. has spent over \$1.4 billion in Tunisia following the Jasmine Revolution on efforts “focus[ing] on an array of targeted areas that include ensuring and enhancing internal and external security, promoting democratic practices and good governance, and supporting sustainable economic growth.”<sup>6</sup> **What makes State believe \$2 million more will succeed where \$1.4 billion has failed?**

## THE MONEY PIT

***DHS and GSA have spent \$2,120,040,355.35 trying to turn an abandoned mental hospital into a new DHS headquarters***

St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., has a long history. Congress created the hospital as the Government Hospital for the Insane in 1855.<sup>7</sup> During the Civil War, it served as a general hospital, at which time, according to a D.C. government website, “[w]ounded soldiers ... were reluctant to admit that they were housed in an insane asylum, and instead referred to their location as ‘St. Elizabeths,’” which was “the name given to the original 600-acre tract of land. ...”<sup>8</sup> Eventually, tenants totally abandoned the West Campus, while a mental hospital remains on the East Campus.<sup>9</sup>

But in recent years, government waste has entered the story. **The General Services Administration (GSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have been attempting, since 2005 and at a cost of more than \$2.1 billion to the taxpayer,<sup>10</sup> to establish a headquarters for DHS on parts of the property.<sup>11</sup>** This effort includes creating office space for the Office of Secretary of Homeland Security and other crucial senior personnel in the West Campus’ main building.<sup>12</sup>

If you want to turn an historical mental institution into a high-tech and secure government facility, you will face a multitude of problems along the way.

The problems DHS and GSA have faced are particularly fundamental, which raises

questions as to why the agencies selected the site in the first place. First – **the slope on which they are building the site is unstable.**<sup>13</sup> Federal Spending Oversight Subcommittee staff requested information regarding what percentage of the site is unstable. **GSA responded that the entirety of the site was not unstable, but up to 30 percent was subject to “anticipated slope instabilities.”**<sup>14</sup>

Because the entire site is an historical landmark, GSA has had to work around D.C. preservation regulations, including maintaining the exterior façade of key buildings.<sup>15</sup> So when GSA and DHS gutted the interior of the buildings, they kept the exteriors intact to use as shells for newly constructed buildings within the walls of the originals.<sup>16</sup> In 2010, GSA learned the buildings lacked adequate



**Photo of a hallway in the main DHS facility at St. Elizabeths. Each door leads to an office that used to be a bedroom in the mental hospital. Photo Credit: FSO Staff**

foundations, and some were literally sinking into the ground.<sup>17</sup> **In sum, GSA has spent \$305 million on “adaptive re-use,” or, in other words, maintaining the historical facets of the buildings to conform to historical preservation requirements.**<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, there are portions of the site which are “restricted for development” due to historical and environmental concerns.<sup>19</sup> GSA and DHS have also agreed other portions of the site – inside the secure perimeter – must remain open to the public.<sup>20</sup> **The surrounding community will maintain access to the site, albeit on a limited and supervised basis, to visit a hilltop from which community members traditionally watch Fourth of July fireworks, visit the cemetery on site, and use an auditorium.**<sup>21</sup>



**Photo of the auditorium on site at St. Elizabeths. Despite being inside the secure perimeter, the public will maintain access to it after DHS moves into the facility. Photo Credit: FSO Staff**

If there were not enough problems with the physical site itself, DHS has also spent significant sums recreating the interior architecture down to the crown moldings, carvings, and other intricacies of interior design.<sup>22</sup>

The decision to use St. Elizabeths Hospital, in light of all of these concerns, becomes even more starkly acute when one

considers DHS and GSA considered roughly 12 other sites for their headquarters, instead choosing a site with historical, environmental, and geological issues.<sup>23</sup>

Even worse? **After investing so exorbitant a sum on adaptive re-use, GSA and DHS are reportedly largely chucking the model and “proposing to demolish at least five of the historic buildings.”**<sup>24</sup>

Though certain components of DHS, such as the Coast Guard’s headquarters<sup>25</sup> and the Office of the Secretary of Homeland Security,<sup>26</sup> have finally transferred there, the American people are expected to spend millions more in a project that has become a textbook example of poor government planning – and that is now projected to last until 2026.<sup>27</sup> Rest assured there will be legislative action taken to ensure this boondoggle does not continue to waste taxpayer dollars.

## **THE PERUVIAN GREEN NEW DEAL**

***USAID is committing “up to” \$10,000,000.00 on “green growth” in Peru***

In March 2019, the U.S. Senate unanimously rejected a suite of policies, dubbed the “Green New Deal,” proposed by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), which proponents claim will support “green growth” in the United States. By a vote of 0-57, with 43 Senate Democrats, including every Democrat senator running for President of the United States, abstaining in “protest,”<sup>28</sup> the representatives of the American people roundly rejected these policies.<sup>29</sup> Whereas every senator, Republican and Democrat,

refused to support the policies on the record, (perhaps recognizing the devastating damage implementation would do to the American job market and larger economy), Green New Deal bureaucrats at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) apparently feel some sympathy for them. **How else can one explain the agency spending \$10 million to develop “Green Growth in Peru”?**<sup>30</sup>

That’s right! USAID is committing “up to” 10 million American taxpayer dollars “to develop new and innovative alliances with the private sector that advance environmentally-friendly economic development (i.e. green growth) in Peru.”<sup>31</sup> They add, “The envisioned activities will facilitate private sector financing and investment in value chains that lead to improved management of natural resources and a reduction of GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions.”<sup>32</sup>

It wasn’t enough for the federal government to waste taxpayer funds on boondoggles such as Solyndra. Now it wants to go abroad and do the same!

**SANDY FRAUD**  
***New York City agreed to repay \$5,303,624.00 after receiving federal money to fix junked vehicles it claimed were damaged by Superstorm Sandy***

Think back to October 2012. On the lighter side, the Baltimore Ravens were on their way to winning the Super Bowl, and the San Francisco Giants swept the Detroit Tigers to win the World Series. But hearts were also

heavy, as Superstorm Sandy cut its tragic path of devastation at the end of the month. Fast forward to 2019 and Sandy is still in the headlines, this time as part of yet another story of fraud and abuse undermining the best of intentions with the American people’s money.

**In a proposed settlement in a lawsuit, New York City agreed to repay \$5,303,624 in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance for filing false claims regarding certain vehicles the storm supposedly damaged.**<sup>33</sup>

“Specifically,” according to the Justice Department press release earlier this year, “the City will make a cash payment of \$4,126,227.34 and relinquish rights to an additional \$1,177,396.66 that FEMA had previously approved for disbursement.”<sup>34</sup>

The problems began when the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) submitted a list of claims to FEMA for a total of \$12,758,664 in reimbursement for vehicles, all of which it claimed were damaged by the storm.<sup>35</sup> However, “**many of the vehicles” instead were already “non-operational—and some had even been marked for salvage—years before Sandy,**” the federal government stated in its complaint.<sup>36</sup> The government also made it clear that proper oversight was ignored every step of the way.<sup>37</sup>

It turns out, according to the federal government, that **an NYC DOT employee even brought the problem up, informing a Deputy Commissioner shortly after the City made its initial request that it had included vehicles it should not have submitted.**<sup>38</sup> In its complaint, the federal government claimed **the City employee**

mentioned certain vehicles were the same ones NYC DOT had years before told the NYPD “were sitting under the highway in the dump for seven years ... being pick[ed] apart by vandals stealing brass fittings, copper wire harnesses and anything else they could sell for scrap.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite this revelation, only when the NYC DOT found out the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York began investigating did it start to come clean.<sup>40</sup>

Amazingly, it required multiple revisions of the list the NYC DOT sent to FEMA to remove all false claims.<sup>41</sup>

This is not the first discussion regarding the federal government, waste, and Sandy recovery money, and surely it will not be the last.<sup>42</sup> Such stories are vivid reminders of the strict vigilance needed to ensure that when the federal government authorizes huge sums of taxpayer money for disaster relief, the disasters are limited to the natural ones to which it means to respond.

## **ONCE UPON A TIME IN KARACHI**

***State is spending up to \$100,000.00 to increase the capacity of the Pakistani film industry***

People say that show business is one of the hardest industries into which to break. Filmmakers, producers, directors, writers, and actors often struggle in anonymity for years or decades before finally writing the hit, getting the role, or having that one idea that will slingshot them to fame and fortune.

But lucky for a handful of Pakistani filmmakers, the State Department is spending up to \$100,000 to “[e]xpand and strengthen” Pakistan’s film industry by teaching “aspiring filmmakers” how to write screenplays and make films.<sup>43</sup>

The grantee organization will “[d]evelop a short film competition with a minimum of fifty (50) aspiring filmmakers and film or media students from undergraduate and graduate film and media programs at universities across Sindh and Baluchistan ... on themes of ‘strength in diversity’ and ‘women’s empowerment.’”<sup>44</sup>

The lucky aspiring filmmakers and film students will benefit from the State Department flying an American filmmaker to Pakistan to put on “two (2) masterclasses on screenwriting and filmmaking...”<sup>45</sup> This American also “may partner with the Karachi Film Society (KFS), the parent body of the Pakistan International Film Festival (PIFF), or a similar organization” to help train select Festival participants through multiple workshops focusing on the technical aspects of the trade.<sup>46</sup>

The organization will be required to facilitate tickets to the Festival awards for those participating in the grantee’s short film competition, as well as help them boost their connections while there.<sup>47</sup> According to the Festival’s website, it “aims to be the largest film festival in Pakistan,” with a goal of “creat[ing] a unique platform which promotes both Pakistani cinema and Pakistani filmmakers by showcasing their films to diverse international audiences.”<sup>48</sup> Finally, the grantee will help maximize media coverage of the American’s

participation at the Festival and assistance to Pakistani filmmakers.<sup>49</sup>

With the State Department going to such lengths to spend Americans' tax dollars on supporting Pakistani filmmakers, one might assume the industry is flailing. It is not. The State Department itself admits that "Pakistan's film industry is growing dramatically."<sup>50</sup>

If the industry is growing "dramatically" and offering more opportunities to Pakistani filmmakers than ever before, why do Pakistanis need American tax dollars to further build its capacity? Why are Americans responsible for paying to make Pakistani films better? Simply put, Americans are not responsible, but their State Department is intent on wasting their hard-earned money anyway.

**BRACE FOR WASTE**  
**Centers for Medicare and Medicaid paid \$48,000,000,000.00 in improper payments in Fiscal Year 2018 – paid over \$900,000,000.00 in one alleged wide-ranging, multi-year scheme**

When it comes to federal programs, Medicare ranks only behind Social Security as one of the largest, totaling \$582 billion spent in FY 2018.<sup>51</sup> Since the program is so big, it opens up all sorts of possibilities for abuse, and it looks like we are seeing another example. Earlier this year, the federal government alleged scammers' plans led to **\$1.2 billion in losses in the Medicare program – including over \$900 million in improper Medicare payments alone** – before the Department of Health and Human Services Office of

Inspector General (HHS OIG) and other investigators closed in, with 24 individuals ultimately charged.<sup>52</sup>

In its announcement about the investigation, the Justice Department alleged a wide-ranging, international scheme they said included **Medicare paying for orthopedic braces doctors prescribed "either without any patient interaction or with only a brief telephonic conversation with patients they had never met or seen."**<sup>53</sup> To make matters worse, some received braces they did not want, NBC News reported, adding that prosecutors noted this "could disqualify them from receiving a brace under Medicare if they need one in the future."<sup>54</sup> **The Justice Department also alleged money was "laundered through international shell corporations," before being spent on "exotic automobiles, yachts and luxury real estate in the United States and abroad."**<sup>55</sup>

Unfortunately, this is hardly the only case where it appears the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) made improper payments. **In Fiscal Year 2018 alone, CMS is estimated to have paid \$48 billion in improper payments.**<sup>56</sup> This is not any secret, either. CMS's propensity to make improper payments in part forced the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to deem it a High Risk Program,<sup>57</sup> a moniker it has retained since GAO initially imposed it in 1990.<sup>58</sup> **Over 80 GAO recommendations remain unfulfilled, with 28 recommendations alone made between the 2017 and 2019 High Risk Lists, the last two iterations of the report.**<sup>59</sup>

Improper payments fundamentally undermine the effectiveness and stability of federal programs, and Medicare itself is already

in a precarious position. In fact, **CMS predicts the Medicare Hospital Insurance (HI) trust fund will be entirely depleted come 2026.**<sup>60</sup> Moreover, CMS also projects that **“Medicare’s costs under current law [will] rise steadily from their current level of 3.7 percent of GDP in 2018 to 6.0 percent in 2043.”**<sup>61</sup> Under even good circumstances, never mind the ones in which Medicare finds itself, both the program and the American people can ill-afford to be paying out nearly \$50 billion in improper payments.

Perhaps the real improper payment is the giant amount of mandatory spending Congress allocates to CMS, allowing Medicare and Medicaid to grow unabated.

### **WWW’S AND ABC’S**

***State is spending “up to” \$150,000.00 to teach English and IT skills at Madrassas***

The State Department has a long history of bringing Islamic scholars to American schools, just in this decade spending millions on a program for Afghan lawyers, including those with a background in Sharia law, to study at Ohio Northern University.<sup>62</sup> Now, the State Department is flipping the script. Instead of paying to bring Islamic students to the U.S., the State Department is paying **“up to” \$150,000 “for a project to support teaching the English language, basic IT skills, leadership, and tolerance”** to students **“at 23 religious schools (Madrassas) throughout the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR).”**<sup>63</sup>

The State Department’s excessively optimistic view is that by teaching future Mullahs English, basic IT skills, and about “a

culture of tolerance, coexistence, and acceptance,” the madrassas will in part “help produce open minded Mullahs (religious leaders) in the future.”<sup>64</sup> However, it is equally possible this grant could help lead to more radicals in the future knowing how to better speak English and use the internet, skills which could then be used to radicalize Americans.

Whatever the outcome of the grant, one thing is certain, at the very least. Before we send \$150,000 in American taxes abroad to teach English and IT skills, we should first consider our own country’s situation.

The most recent American Community Survey run by the **Census Bureau determined that 8.5 percent of Americans ages five and up are limited in English proficiency.**<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, according to the Pew Research Center in 2019, one in ten Americans do not go on the internet.<sup>66</sup> According to a 2013 Pew survey, of the percentage then that did not use the internet, roughly one third believed it “was too difficult to use. ...”<sup>67</sup>

Needless to say, work remains to be done to strengthen both English language talents and internet abilities here at home before Americans give up more resources to teach those skills in madrassas in Iraq.

### **WHEN A FROG LOVES A WOMAN**

***NSF spent a significant portion of a \$466,991.00 grant on studying frog mating calls***

If you were told the federal government was going to study how a species of animal mates, it’s not too likely the subject of this next

story would make the short list of candidates that came to mind.

In this case, the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** spent a significant portion of a grant totaling \$466,991<sup>68</sup> on studying the mating call of the male túngara frog of Panama.

In a look at the effects of urbanization, the study examined the differences between the mating call in the city and in the forest, including its likelihood of attracting midges and bats in each of those environments.<sup>69</sup>

### Small Frogs Under the Big Lights

So what did the researchers determine? In short, urban life seems to have benefited the male frogs, who “call at higher rates” and have a more complex, attractive mating call than their forest-dwelling counterparts.<sup>70</sup> While the male urban frogs “experience higher competition for mating opportunities,” they also face less risk from predators.<sup>71</sup>



**Túngara frog mid-mating call. Photo Credit: The Scientist.com and Ximena Bernal <https://www.the-scientist.com/notebook/these-flies-hijack-frogs-love-calls-30193>.**

When the researchers switched the frogs’ environments, they found that urban frogs could quickly adjust their calls to help protect from threats.<sup>72</sup> But the forest frogs’ calls didn’t get more attractive when they went to the city.<sup>73</sup>

As of this writing, our government has piled up a debt over \$22 trillion, along with a 10-month deficit of \$866 billion that is projected to rise to over \$1 trillion by the end of the fiscal year.<sup>74</sup> **As we deal with this crisis and also wrestle with paying for actual priorities, do we really want government funding studies of a non-endangered<sup>75</sup> frog’s mating habits?**

Panamanian frog mating calls may sound different in forests and cities, but all this use of your resources sounds like to us is waste.

### **SCHOLARS IN PARADISE**

**Funds from grants worth \$51,722,107.00 were used to do Google Scholar searches, in Hawaii, about the effects of climate hazards**

It doesn’t take a lot to get published in academic journals nowadays. **Just ask researchers who used federal money from grants worth \$51,722,107<sup>76</sup> from the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to convene in Hawaii and search the already existing literature of the impacts of “climate hazards” on humans, as well as analyze and compile the results.<sup>77</sup>**

That’s right! The paper, entitled *Broad Threat to Humanity from Cumulative Climate Hazards Intensified by Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, is largely a compilation and analysis of a search of already existing literature the researchers found on Google Scholar between February and March 2017<sup>78</sup> ... in Hawaii.<sup>79</sup> In connection,

they also developed a database to centralize the research.<sup>80</sup> Among other things, the researchers reported climate hazards being linked to increased cases of diarrhea, as well as to bedwetting, lower “academic performance,” and other problems.<sup>81</sup>

The paper itself was a collaborative effort between 23 researchers from around the world.<sup>82</sup> At least 5 of the 23 received federal funding.<sup>83</sup>

Given our astronomical debt and skyrocketing deficits, were taxpayer funds really needed for this compilation and further study of previous research?

Another question must also be asked: if the researchers are so concerned about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, why did they travel to Hawaii from around the world in order to do a study that consisted of sitting at a computer and perusing Google?<sup>84</sup>

### Conclusions or Biases?

The authors used the paper to sound an alarm of “the broad and heightened threat to humanity from ongoing GHG emissions intensifying multiple climate hazards to which humanity is currently vulnerable.”<sup>85</sup> Yet, despite the authors’ central conclusion being an argument for “substantial and timely reduction of GHG emissions,” they admit both that “[t]he impacts reported here have varying degrees of uncertainty related to their detection and attribution to climate hazards,” as well as that “[a] related uncertainty is the extent to which climate hazards implicated in observed impacts were due to anthropogenic forcing.”<sup>86</sup> They also note that “pinning down human

influences on climactic changes requires considerable caution.”<sup>87</sup>

Despite the myriad uncertainties, the authors forge on, adding, “the human contribution to recent climactic changes is very likely. ...”<sup>88</sup> We’ll leave it to readers to decide if they stuck the landing on any possible jump to conclusions.

Meanwhile, though the researchers describe their efforts to limit bias, they also allow for a possible “bias in the literature itself towards reporting negative impacts.”<sup>89</sup>

Consider us biased toward better uses of taxpayer resources.

### **TOOK THE PROPERTY AND RAN**

***Army Corps of Engineers paid \$325,485.00 for property confiscated in Afghanistan by the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces***

U.S. armed forces and American contractors have been in Afghanistan since 2001. One might think the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), which the United States helps fund by “provid[ing] the bulk of funding necessary to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANDSF,”<sup>90</sup> would not harass the personnel of American contractors or confiscate contractor property, given both parties are ostensibly on the same side. You would be wrong. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) reviewed contracts between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and American contractors and found “ANDSF personnel had confiscated more than \$780,000 in property and equipment. ...”

**SIGAR also revealed reports of ANDSF harassing our contractors' personnel.<sup>91</sup>**

Regarding the property, SIGAR found that across three contracts, ANDSF confiscated over \$780,000 in U.S. contractor material - "despite the provision of approximately \$1,302,800 in excess spare parts and equipment" from the first two contracts.<sup>92</sup>

**American taxpayers footed a \$325,484 bill for the property ANDSF confiscated under the first two contracts** that USACE was unable to recover.<sup>93</sup> As of this writing, the current sum of hundreds of thousands of dollars regarding equipment confiscated under the third contract may expand even further as USACE conducts its review.<sup>94</sup>

**(Keep this story in mind as the federal government continues to spend over \$51 billion a year nation-building in Afghanistan.)**

Worse than the confiscated equipment was the harassment ANDSF members forced our contractors' personnel to endure. **SIGAR's findings brought to light reported mistreatment such as detention of staff, intimidation, and threats, with it appearing such incidents happened in part due to ANDSF attempting to get them to do work that was not covered under the contract or to prevent them from keeping the contractors' own property.<sup>95</sup>** SIGAR reported that one U.S. contractor company alone filed hundreds of "serious incident reports (SIR)s," including many regarding the problems listed above, in a period of just a little over two years.<sup>96</sup>

Amazingly, SIGAR also found that the **USACE did not "have an official system in**

**place to record actions it has taken to resolve incidents reported by contractor staff."**<sup>97</sup> While USACE agreed with SIGAR's recommendation and began a process for tracking incidents reported, one hopes it will turn more focus to stopping such incidents from even taking place.<sup>98</sup>

The easiest solution for USACE and the rest of the U.S. armed forces would be to recognize the U.S. mission in Afghanistan today has expanded further than anybody could have imagined in 2001. Although the U.S. originally deployed personnel to Afghanistan with the mission of disrupting and destroying al-Qaeda and Taliban networks, American forces are now on a nation-building expedition gone horribly wrong.

Clearly, there are larger costs, human and monetary, of nation-building we simply cannot ignore.

<sup>1</sup> WorldAtlas, “Presidents of Tunisia Since 1957.” *WorldAtlas.com*, 2019.

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/presidents-of-tunisia-since-1957.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> State Department Funding Opportunity #SFOP0005045.

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=305899>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Reinhart, RJ, “Majority in U.S. Still Say a Third Party Is Needed.” *Gallup*, October 26, 2018.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/244094/majority-say-third-party-needed.aspx>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of State Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, “U.S. Relations With Tunisia: Bilateral Fact Sheet,” *U.S. State Department*, July 20, 2018.

<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-tunisia/>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, “History of St. Elizabeths.” *U.S. General Services Administration*, May, 2013.

<http://www.stelizabethsdevelopment.com/history.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Stelizabethseast.com, “East Campus History.”

*Stelizabethseast.com*, 2019.

<https://stelizabethseast.com/our-history/>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, “History of St. Elizabeths.” *U.S. General Services Administration*, May, 2013.

<http://www.stelizabethsdevelopment.com/history.html>.

<sup>10</sup> FSO Staff Oversight Briefing at St. Elizabeths, March 8, 2019 and follow-up call with GSA, April 17, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, “Master Plan for the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths West Campus.” *U.S. General Services Administration*, January 10, 2019.

<https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2019January/MP211MasterPlanfortheDepartmentofHomelandSecurityHeadquartersConsolidationatSt.ElizabethsWestCampusInformationSheetJan2019.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> FSO Staff Oversight Briefing at St. Elizabeths, March 8, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> FSO Follow-Up Call with GSA, April 17, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> FSO Staff Oversight Briefing at St. Elizabeths, March 8, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> FSO Follow-Up Call with GSA, April 17, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> FSO Staff Oversight Briefing at St. Elizabeths, March 8, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> FSO Follow-Up Call with GSA, April 17, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Sernovitz, Daniel J., “Major shift at St. E’s: GSA to emphasize new DHS construction, not historic reuse.” *Washington Business Journal*, March 8, 2019. <https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2019/03/08/gsa-focuses-on-new-construction-for-dhs-at-st-es.html>.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, “U.S. Coast Guard Opens Its Headquarters At St. Elizabeths.” *U.S. General Services Administration*, August 13, 2017. <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-national-capital-region-11/region-11-newsroom/featured-stories/us-coast-guard-opens-its-headquarters-at-st-elizabeths>.

<sup>26</sup> Heckman, Jory, “DHS St. Elizabeths campus gains ‘center of gravity’ with new headquarters.” *Federal News Network*, June 21, 2019.

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/facilities-construction/2019/06/dhs-st-elizabeths-campus-gains-center-of-gravity-with-new-headquarters/slide/1/>.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>

<https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/26/democrats-protest-green-new-deal-vote-2943919>

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