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Study: US Aid in Afghanistan Bolstered Taliban Support

By Jason Ditz
December 16, 2015

A study from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) is revealing a surprising unintended consequence of the massive USAID “stability” schemes being built across Afghanistan, a significant boost for the Taliban.

The projects, things like a new wall around a school yard and an irrigation system in a village, were some of thousands of US projects which overall cost billions of dollars. But far from buying loyalty to the US-backed government, they actually bought more support for the Taliban.

According to the study, villagers believed that the Taliban was likely to block construction of the projects by US-paid contractors, and ultimately ended up backing the Taliban even more to keep them from sabotaging the projects.

USAID dismissed the concerns, saying these were just a few examples out of 5,000 villages that got projects, but then of course, this is just one of scores of reports on different projects going

horribly wrong, and while not every single project led villagers to endorse the Taliban, the number that worked out like USAID figured they would is rare indeed.