



SPECIAL EDITION WASTE REPORT for November 12, 2015

DOD's \$43 Million Gas Station Almost No One Can Use

The Waste Report strives to report on original examples of egregious government waste uncovered by the Federal Spending Oversight Subcommittee (FSO). However, sometimes something so shocking comes along that it deserves mention here, even though has already come to public attention. This is one of those cases.

Several news outlets have reported on a **\$43 million gas station built by the Department of Defense in Afghanistan**. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction issued a *Special Report* in late October on the compressed natural gas (CNG) filling station, **which cost at least 86 times more than similar projects**.¹

FSO dug deeper into the report and found the ridiculous price tag just scratches the surface.

To begin with, the IG found no evidence that DOD ever did a feasibility study before moving forward with the project. Had they done so, they would have found that **Afghanistan, “[I]acks the natural gas transmission and local distribution infrastructure necessary to support a viable market for CNG vehicles.”**

But even if getting CNG to the station was not a problem, it seems no one in Afghanistan can afford vehicles that run on the fuel. CNG conversion costs as much as \$800, in a country where the average annual income is about \$690. This may explain why **the U.S. government paid to convert at least 120 Afghan vehicles to CNG**. What is strange is one of the project goals was to expand CNG usage to Mazar-e Shariff because of its 100,000 cars. But DOD failed to do its home work, mischaracterized the city as the 2nd largest in the country (it is actually 4th) and ignoring the economics of transitioning those cars to CNG.

Even more troubling is that DOD seemed to have stonewalled the whole investigation. The IG noted that they discovered the vehicle conversions in a video on a contractor's website (where they noted the U.S. government footed the bill). DOD simply did not respond to IG inquiries on that subject.

In fact, DOD did not answer any of the IG's questions, saying the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO-the \$800 million program through which the project was funded) was shuttered in March of this year and no one knows anything about the program anymore. As the IG rightly said in the report's cover letter, **“Frankly, I find it both shocking and incredible that DOD asserts that it no longer has any knowledge about TFBSO, an \$800 million program that reported directly to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and only shut down a little over six months ago.”**

These are the ingredients of waste:

An unaudited bureaucracy² flush with (your) cash, a rebuilding effort, and an environmental angle in a warzone halfway around the world.

¹ *DOD'S COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS FILLING STATION IN AFGHANISTAN: AN ILL-CONCEIVED \$43 MILLION PROJECT*; Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction; Afghanistan. October 2015

² Senator Rand Paul, M.D., Chairman of the FSO Subcommittee introduced the [Audit the Pentagon Act of 2015 \(S. 300\)](#) on January 26, 2015