

Classified: US Military Imposes ‘Startling’ Blackout on Key Details of War in Afghanistan

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U.S. Army General John F. Campbell speaks Dec 8, 2014 at North Kabul Afghanistan International Airport, Afghanistan. (Photo: ResoluteSupportMedia/flickr/public domain)

In an unprecedented blackout, top U.S. military officials have quietly classified key information about how they are spending the over \$65 billion dollars appropriated since 2002 to train Afghan forces.

New York Times reporter Matthew Rosenberg, who [broke](#) the story in the press on Thursday, explained, “until this month the American-led coalition regularly shared details on how the money was being put to use and on the Afghan forces’ progress.”

However, this information has been suddenly declared off-limits, meaning that over 100 critical aspects of U.S. policy in Afghanistan are shielded from public disclosure. These include:

- How much money the U.S. spends on weapons and equipment for the Afghan National Army.
- The total dollars the U.S. spends on salaries for Afghan national police.
- The number of active Afghan military and police personnel.
- Full details about U.S. training programs for Afghan forces.

A [report](#) released this week by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko states, “The classification of this volume of data for SIGAR’s quarterly report is unprecedented.”

“The decision leaves SIGAR for the first time in six years unable to publicly report on most of the U.S.-taxpayer-funded efforts to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces),” the report continues.

Addressing the Inspector General, Gen. John F. Campbell, the U.S. commander of coalition forces, claimed that classification is necessary to “protect the lives of those individuals who could be put at risk by the release of sensitive information.”

But Steven Aftergood, director of the Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy, [pointed out](#), “The General did not explain how budget and contracting

information, among other routine data, could be used to sharpen attacks against allied forces.”

“For years, this kind of information has been available,” Aftergood [told Frontline](#). “It’s not just a particular fact or figure that’s being classified, but whole categories of previously public information. That is both stunning and disturbing.”

Others drew their own conclusions:

Failure in training Afghan military forces is so epic (and costly) that U.S. has decided to make it classified: <http://t.co/79ioEOplUW>

— Dan Froomkin (@froomkin) [January 29, 2015](#)

The U.S. military is pulling the veil over this information at a time when the United States is [locking in](#) at least another decade of war in the country and publicly claiming that its strategy centers on the training and building of Afghan forces. The Obama administration is [expected](#) to request for the 2016 budget at least \$42 billion for the war in Afghanistan, signaling the long-term nature of U.S. military entanglement in the country.

The new classifications, furthermore, come at an especially dangerous time for Afghan people. [According to](#) the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 2014 was the deadliest year on record for Afghan civilians since the global body began making reports in 2009.

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