

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

First Report

**THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN
AFGHANISTAN AND THE
SURROUNDING REGION**

Volume I

Report and Proceedings of the Committee

*Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed
17 December 2001*

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON: THE STATIONERY OFFICE
£0.00

The International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is appointed to examine on behalf of the House of Commons the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for International Development. Its constitution and powers are set out in House of Commons Standing Order No. 152.

The Committee has a maximum of eleven Members, of whom the quorum for any formal proceedings is three. The members of the Committee are appointed by the House and unless discharged remain on the Committee until the next dissolution of Parliament. The present membership of the Committee since its nomination on 16 July 2001 is as follows:

Tony Baldry (Banbury, Conservative) (*added 19.07.2001*)
Mr John Battle (Leeds West, Labour)
Hugh Bayley (City of York, Labour)
Mr Alistair Burt (NE Bedfordshire, Labour) (*discharged 22.11.2001*)
Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland, Liberal Democrat) (*added 05.11.2001*)
Ann Clwyd MP (Cynon Valley, Labour)
Mr Tony Colman MP (Putney, Labour)
Mr Nigel Jones MP (Cheltenham, Liberal Democrat) (*discharged 05.11.01*)
Mr Piara S Khabra MP (Ealing Southall, Labour)
Mr Edward Leigh (*discharged 19.07.2001*)
Chris McCafferty (Calder Valley, Labour)
Mr Andrew Robathan MP (Blaby, Conservative)
Mr Robert Walter (Dorset North, Labour) (*added 22.11.2001*)
Tony Worthington MP (Clydebank and Milngavie, Labour)

Tony Baldry was elected Chairman on 19 July 2001.

The Committee has the power to require the submission of written evidence and documents, to examine witnesses, and to make Reports to the House. In the footnotes to this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by 'Q' followed by the question number, references to the written evidence are indicated by 'Ev' followed by a page number.

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including Press Notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/indhome.htm.

All correspondences should be addressed to the Clerk of the International Development Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 1221; the Committee's e-mail address is: indcom@parliament.uk.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
REPORT	
Background	v
Acknowledgements	v
Summary	vii
	<i>Paragraph</i>
Introduction	1
Future Inquiry	4
1. Overview	5
2. Impact of September 11	10
3. Delivering humanitarian assistance in the current crisis	16
Funding and the international response	16
The Donor Alert	16
Pledges and Commitments	18
Funding humanitarian operations	21
The European Commission's contribution	26
DFID's contribution	27
Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons	31
The situation before September 11	31
Refugees	32
Refugees in the current crisis	34
IDPs and stranded vulnerable populations	39
Camps inside Afghanistan	42
Food and Non-food aid	43
Background to the food crisis	43
The WFP Regional Emergency Operation	45
Actions by the World Food Programme	46
The logistics of food and non-food deliveries	50
Pause in the bombing	54
Bypassing the urban logistic hubs	55
Primary distribution, secondary distribution and distribution to vulnerable populations	56
Non-food needs	61
Purchasing surplus food locally	62
Regional Considerations	63
US Military food drops of humanitarian daily rations	64
4. Context for Humanitarian Assistance in the current crisis	65

Need for stability/law and order	65
International humanitarian law and the protection of humanitarian relief workers	67
Co-ordination of the aid effort	70
Political, Military and Humanitarian co-ordination	71
Joint Logistics Centre	72
Importance of effective communication	75
The role of international and national staff	77
Access and a humanitarian space	79
Preparedness and prediction	80
The media response to the crisis	83
Politicisation of humanitarian assistance	84
5. Looking forward to longer term reconstruction needs	85
Involving the Afghan people	88
Security and stability	90
The role of the UN and the international community in tackling poverty	91
The shape of a future government	92
The need for a regional aid strategy	96
From food-for-work to institution building – bridging the gap	97
Repatriation	98
The outlook for food security	xl
Opium production	xl
Basic services	xl
Demobilisation, disarmament and child soldiers	xli
Demining	xli
The role of women	xlii
Risk of Talibanisation of Pakistan	xlii
6. Conclusion	xliii
	<i>Page</i>
LIST OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	xlv
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS	xlix
LIST OF WITNESSES	l
LIST OF MEMORANDA INCLUDED IN THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE	li
LIST OF APPENDICES TO THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE	li
LIST OF MEMORANDA RECEIVED AND PLACED IN THE LIBRARY	lii

FIRST REPORT

The International Development Committee has agreed to the following Report:—

THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE SURROUNDING REGION

Background

On 16 October 2001, we announced a short inquiry into the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the surrounding region. It was the Committee's intention that the inquiry would focus on the humanitarian crisis as a precursor to a more detailed inquiry on the longer-term reconstruction, to be undertaken later. As a result, this report concerns itself with the humanitarian crisis, but it also briefly considers some of the issues that will have to be addressed in any plans for the longer term rebuilding of Afghanistan.

Acknowledgements

We received written evidence from a number of organisations and held four evidence sessions. We are grateful to all those who gave evidence to the inquiry and have included a list of all those from whom we heard oral evidence at the end of this Report. In particular we would like to thank Catherine Bertini, Executive Director, World Food Programme; Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF; Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Co-ordinator and Director, UNOCHA, Geneva and Sakandar Ali, Country Representative for Afghanistan, Islamic Relief.

Although the security situation precluded a visit to Afghanistan, the Committee was able to undertake a visit to Pakistan in connection with this inquiry. We would like to thank those who assisted with its inquiry during the visit, especially Mr Michael Sackett, Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator, UNOCHA, Islamabad; Mr Filippo Grandi, Chief of Mission, UNHCR Afghanistan; Mr Mohammad Naeem Khan, Commissioner for Refugees, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees; Mr Roy Herrmann, UNHCR, Peshawar; Mr Abbas Sarfraz Khan, Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Northern Areas, SAFRON and Housing Works, Government of Pakistan; Mr Ramiro Loes Da Silva, Transport Director, World Food Programme, Afghanistan Office. We also express our gratitude to the British High Commission in Islamabad for organising the programme at very short notice.

Summary

As early as June 2001, a severe drought and a lack of food were causing a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and large numbers of people were displaced. Many more were stranded in their homes, too weak to seek food and water elsewhere. The attacks of September 11 set in train a series of events that hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance. International aid agencies withdrew their staff. The bombing of Taliban positions from 7 October brought a further displacement of people. The ground offensive by the Northern Alliance and the rapid collapse of the Taliban forces allowed greater access to much of the country, but created further fear and insecurity. Rising levels of factional tension and fighting, looting by armed gangs and general banditry hampered relief efforts. Such insecurity remains the most significant obstacle to the humanitarian relief effort.

The UN agencies and NGOs issued a collective call for funds as a Donor Alert. Donors have pledged funding, but have been slow to turn pledges into cash payments. The humanitarian operation remains underfunded. DFID has responded well, being the first donor to make contributions against the Donor Alert and in providing important technical assistance.

The predicted exodus of refugees never occurred as closed borders resulted in fewer refugees fleeing. A lack of food and water for the internally displaced and internally stranded populations in Afghanistan remains the principal concern. Although food could not be shipped into Afghanistan for ten days after the September 11 attacks, primary distribution, the delivery of food into warehouses inside the country, has been a success. While UN agencies have been flexible in their approach, problems with onward distribution to the vulnerable continues to give rise to concern.

Security, stability and the protection of humanitarian aid workers are vital for the continued delivery of assistance. The relief effort is relatively well co-ordinated and the Joint Logistics Operation should prove a useful model for the future. The successful co-ordination may be in part due to the existence of established mechanisms to build on.

Further ahead, the focus will need to be on involving the Afghan people, particularly women, in rebuilding their country. Reconstruction will require stability and security. The repatriation of the large Afghan refugee populations in neighbouring countries must be addressed. Difficult times lie ahead – in rebuilding basic services, ensuring food security, developing agriculture, and demobilising tribal factions. The donor governments will have to make, and hold to, a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan.

Three key findings emerge from this enquiry:

- there is an ongoing humanitarian concern stemming from problems in secondary distribution largely as a consequence of insecurity over large parts of Afghanistan;
- a lack of funding in certain areas and a tardiness in turning pledges into cash is resulting in gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance;
- the courage and dedication of local Afghans (NGO staff), particularly Afghan women, played a crucial part in maintaining humanitarian and other development assistance during the crisis. The Afghan people

have demonstrated that they should be central to the future development of Afghanistan.

Introduction

1. This is a crisis about a lack of food. The conflict and events of September 11 have made the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan more complex but the root cause of the problem remains starvation. The situation in Afghanistan after three years of drought and twenty years of evolving conflict is extremely fragile¹. The Afghans have lived with poverty for a long time and many are barely able to survive. They face a grave humanitarian situation for the foreseeable future.

2. The Afghanistan UN 2001 Consolidated Appeal indicated that about twelve million people had been affected by a three-year drought, three to four million of them seriously, with one million thought to be at risk of immediate famine². Christian Aid and Islamic Relief told us that as early as June 2001 the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) had warned of widespread famine, a collapse of purchasing power, soaring grain prices and increasing population displacement³. Sakandar Ali of Islamic Relief told us “...the UN Secretary-General in June declared Afghanistan as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. So if we are basing it on that, then at the moment, according to the UN’s own Secretary-General, it is the worst crisis”⁴. The difficulties of delivering large quantities of aid in a country with poor infrastructure and limitations on access to the most vulnerable communities imposed by the Taliban⁵ meant Afghanistan was a country in crisis long before the events of September 11. The insecurity caused by the conflict has, at times, prevented the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

3. This report begins with an overview of the humanitarian crisis in chapter 1 before going on to look at the direct impact of September 11 on the humanitarian relief effort in chapter 2. Chapter 3 considers the different elements of humanitarian crisis before examining the context in which the humanitarian assistance is being delivered in chapter 4. The report also looks, in chapter 5, at some of the issues that will have to be considered in the longer-term reconstruction of Afghanistan. In chapter 6 we draw our final conclusions.

Future Inquiry

4. The Committee intends to return to the subject of Afghanistan and the surrounding area. A shift from immediate food aid assistance to practical strategies for long-term sustainable development will be necessary to ensure Afghanistan is lifted from its position as the poorest country in the world. That shift in policy will need to be monitored closely.

¹Ev 1

²UN Consolidated Appeal, www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2001/afg/index.shtml

³Ev 21

⁴Q115

⁵Ev 1

1. Overview

5. Afghanistan has a population of 25.8 million (including refugees and nomads not in the country)⁶. Its borders, particularly in the south⁷, cut through traditional tribal areas and most of the ethnic groups in Afghanistan have strong links with the neighbouring countries. Despite these strong cross-border ties, people have a deeply-rooted sense of Afghan identity.

6. It is a landlocked and mountainous country whose location in the heart of Central Asia has given it a strategic importance⁸. It has suffered chronic instability during much of its history. Ever since Genghis Khan raged across the Shamoli Plain in the 13th century, foreign powers have sought to control or influence its territory and people. More recently, Afghanistan has been a battleground of foreign powers. Jaya Graves of Southern Voices said that it was possible to see how the current crisis had been created by a number of external countries playing out cold war politics in the 1960s and 1970s⁹.

7. However, the needs of the Afghan people have been overlooked by the international community whose interventions have typically been characterised by a dogged pursuit of self-interest and a willingness to walk away just when Afghanistan needed help the most. Much of the excellent work being done by international aid agencies and NGOs was ignored and under-funded. Clare Short told us "...there was deafening silence before September 11. We had a potential humanitarian catastrophe of very large proportions before September 11 and the media, and most other people, were not in the least bit interested"¹⁰. Within the 2000 Consolidated Appeal the provision for basic services like health, education and water received only 45 per cent of the funding required; without funding for water provision, the limited availability of drinking water has become a critical health issue¹¹.

8. Afghanistan still faces a humanitarian crisis. There is a food crisis for at least six million people¹². Food will have to be brought into the country and distributed to the vulnerable. WFP indicated that fourteen per cent of the vulnerable population (about one million people) will be hard to reach in the winter¹³. Sufficient stocks to last the winter will have to be stockpiled in some areas. As those areas initially less affected by the drought run out of food, the number of people in need of food aid will continue to rise. In its memorandum, UNICEF said there will be more child deaths this winter and the race is still on to deliver as many supplies and as much assistance as possible before the winter¹⁴.

⁶ It is ethnically diverse comprising 38% Pustuns, 25% Tajiks, 19% Hazaras, 6% Uzbeks, 6% Chahar Aimaks and 2.5% Turkmen. Most are Sunni Muslims although Hazaras are Shia Muslims.

⁷ In 1893, the Durand line fixed the southern border of Afghanistan with British India, splitting Afghan tribal areas, leaving half of these Afghans in what is now Pakistan.

⁸ Figure 1 shows a map of Afghanistan. DFID included a detailed relief map of Afghanistan in its memorandum. This is reproduced in Vol II, Ev 118

⁹ Ev 149, [Appendix 2]

¹⁰ Q194

¹¹ UN Consolidated Appeal, www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2001/afg/index.shtml

¹² Ev 86

¹³ Ev 86

¹⁴ Ev 80, [Para 23]

9. The situation on the ground in Afghanistan changes constantly. Despite the collapse of the Taliban, there is still little information coming out about the humanitarian crisis and what Sakandar Ali told us in November still holds “...where there is no information coming out it does not mean that there is no crisis inside the country. I think the crisis inside Afghanistan should be at the top of our agenda”¹⁵.

2. Impact of September 11

10. The worst drought in thirty years had already caused a food emergency in Afghanistan. The attacks of September 11 put in train a series of events that turned the crisis caused by drought into a complex emergency involving military action by coalition forces and an intensification of the existing civil war. Raja Jarrah of CARE International said “The main difference since September 11 is that our response [to the food crisis] is now much harder than it was before”¹⁶. The conflict has led to loss of life, prevention of humanitarian assistance and risks to the safety of humanitarian reliefworkers. Afghanistan has always been a difficult country for aid agencies to operate in but now the situation is compounded by poor security, the dangers of land mines and unexploded ordnance, the absence of international humanitarian workers from much of the country, reduced numbers of Afghan staff and interference by armed groups¹⁷.

11. The events of September 11 led directly to the withdrawal of international and expatriate staff by the UN agencies and international NGOs operating in Afghanistan. But not all work ceased; food was still distributed, UNICEF was able to continue with a nationwide immunisation programme¹⁸ and the British Red Cross told us that local staff managed to run most of the health work, some relief work and water sanitation projects¹⁹. Nevertheless, the absence of international staff has had a detrimental impact on programmes in Afghanistan.

12. It is a testament to the quality and dedication of local staff that operations within Afghanistan were able to continue. Their efforts were, and are, heroic and their bravery and resourcefulness in the face of great personal danger needs to be acknowledged. Great risks were also taken by WFP’s drivers and the Afghan commercial lorry drivers, who successfully brought food into the country despite the intensive bombing of a number of cities by the coalition forces, the instability resulting from the ground war between the various factions, and the general insecurity in the area.

13. The period following September 11 led to heightened tension and a climate of insecurity in Afghanistan²⁰. This was particularly noticeable in urban areas where reprisals by the United States were feared – it was after all only three years since the United States had launched bombing raids on Afghanistan in the wake of the embassy bombings in East Africa. Lorry drivers were less willing to take convoys into Afghanistan. The start of the

¹⁵Q130

¹⁶Q21

¹⁷Ev 115, [Para 16

¹⁸Ev 79, [Paras 16–17]

¹⁹Ev 150, [Appendix 3]

²⁰Ev 50

coalition bombing campaign on October 7 further heightened tension and insecurity. Neighbouring countries closed their borders. Although this prevented refugees materialising in the numbers originally anticipated, there were still many people who became internally displaced or, when they were too weak or too poor to leave their homes, were stranded with no food and little water. The people who earlier had fled from rural areas to towns and cities as a result of the drought found themselves fleeing back to the countryside to escape the bombing²¹.

14. To complicate matters further, the Taliban issued an edict banning almost all communications with bodies outside Afghanistan, particularly via satellite phones. The lack of communications presented a major challenge²² and Raja Jarrah of CARE International noted “The main problem is that we do not have efficient lines of communication with staff within Afghanistan”²³. Only patchy and incomplete information was coming out either from national staff fleeing the country or through the commercial lorry drivers; information was often out of date or distorted through a series of Chinese whispers²⁴. The communications ban, enforced by the threat of death, must have made it difficult for the international staff outside Afghanistan to be assured of the safety of the national staff left behind and to manage ongoing work programmes. Sakandar Ali of Islamic Relief told us “...there was a lack of clarity and lack of quality information coming out of Afghanistan, particularly pertaining to the displacement of people inside the country and also to the refugee figures...”²⁵. It is unsurprising that some of the international staff evacuated to Pakistan seemed to lose touch with what was happening within the country. **We believe that, in the absence of a complete picture, there was a tendency for international agencies and NGOs to generalise from the specific, which may account for some of the differences of opinion as to the scale of the problem that arose early in the crisis.**

15. September 11 focused attention on the crisis in Afghanistan with the result that the response to the crisis is probably better funded than it would otherwise have been²⁶. Similarly, media attention was focused in a way that it had not been earlier in the summer²⁷.

²¹Elizabeth Winter, BAAG, Speech to COASI, 5 October 2001 [not printed]

²²Ev 87

²³Q1

²⁴Q1

²⁵Q69

²⁶Ev 87

²⁷Q11

3. Delivering humanitarian assistance in the current crisis

Funding and the international response

The Donor Alert

16. The inter-agency donor alert for the humanitarian crisis issued on 27 September replaced the 2001 Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan. In addition to specifying the activities that would be supported, outlining plans in broad terms and setting out the food and non-food requirements, it described the co-ordination arrangements and common services that would be put in place. It was intended to alert donors (primarily national governments) to the projected requirements for a six-month period from 1 October 2001 to 31 March 2002, and provided a common reference point for donors to respond to the needs of the humanitarian actors on the ground. It was the result of a consultative process that included the UN, NGOs, local partners and other humanitarian actors. The Donor Alert called for US\$584 million for the delivery of assistance and the protection of existing programmes for up to 7.5 million Afghans. The amount required was subsequently increased to US\$657 million to take account of gross food requirements. The dramatic changes on the ground in Afghanistan following the Northern Alliance's rapid advance and the collapse of the Taliban on 9 November triggered an update of the Donor Alert. The revised Donor Alert was published on 27 November and called for US\$662 million, which, taking into account funds received, left an outstanding requirement for US\$319 million. Due to the level of unpredictability in Afghanistan, the aid agencies began to work to a 30-day planning cycle and the updated donor alert was intended to be read in conjunction with the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) 30 day plan. A new Consolidated Appeal 2002 for Afghanistan will be launched in February 2002 to cover the period 1 October 2001 to 31 December 2002 and will incorporate the original and revised donor alerts.

17. Although the Donor Alert is comprehensive, bilateral donors and NGOs have engaged in projects outside it. These mainly cover the provision of items or services that are not core to humanitarian assistance but which are nonetheless important for refugees, displaced populations and the vulnerable. Such projects might cover supplementary feed, additional healthcare provision and education services.

Pledges and Commitments

18. In its memorandum, the Department for International Development (DFID) indicated that donors had pledged over \$720 million to the current crisis²⁸. But many donors fail to turn their pledges into real commitments and then make the cash available (see table 1). David Walker of Save the Children said "Pledges have been made which are extremely welcome, now let us see the pledges delivered into hard commitments"²⁹. It is unclear why donors hold back on making commitments once money is pledged. They may want to see how effectively the early commitments are used. But, whatever the reason, it is difficult for agencies to prepare properly if money is only made available at the eleventh

²⁸Ev 117, [Para 33] and Ev 121, [Annex H]

²⁹Q86

hour. DFID was applauded by a number of the UN agencies for being the first donor to respond to the donor alert³⁰. The timeliness and flexibility of DFID's interventions was highly praised³¹. Although not making the largest contribution it had carefully reflected the crucial elements of the package that needed funding. **The UK is one of a small number of donors with a good record of turning promises quickly into cash. We encourage DFID to work with those donor countries which also responded rapidly to encourage other donors to ensure that their pledges are converted into real commitments and actual money.**

Pledges by Donors since September 11 ³²		Major Donors by Total Contributions ³³	
Donor country	Amount pledged (US\$)	Donor Country	Contribution (US\$)
United States	320,000,000	United States	108,439,283
Japan	120,000,000	Japan	45,367,543
United Kingdom	58,823,529	United Kingdom	36,460,930
European Commission	38,567,493	Italy	28,076,699
Norway	34,693,878	Netherlands	21,681,215
Netherlands	28,159,611	Germany	14,578,049
France	27,298,040	European Commission	14,127,634
Germany	23,844,786	Denmark	11,586,316
Sweden	18,691,589	Saudi Arabia	10,500,000
Denmark	15,432,099	Sweden	10,390,924
Australia	11,219,513	Norway	9,756,152

Table1: A comparison of funds pledged and funds committed³⁴.

19. Despite the high level of pledges, there is a shortage of money. The 2000 Consolidated Appeal had been only 48 per cent funded³⁵ and the 2001 Consolidated Appeal, launched in November 2000, was also underfunded (see table 2). Carol Bellamy of UNICEF told us that the crisis in Afghanistan, even pre-September 11, was a consistently under-funded emergency³⁶.

Category	% Covered
Advancement of Human Rights	9.85
Alleviation of Human Suffering	67.67
Basic Social Services - Education	57.27
Basic Social Services - Health	48.94
Basic Social Services - Water and Sanitation	2.95
Refugee Repatriation	9.58
Sustainable Livelihoods - Community empowerment	11.7
Sustainable Livelihoods - Food security	11.24
Sustainable Livelihoods - Income generation	0
Sustainable Livelihoods - Infrastructure	0.24
Co-ordination	21.34

³⁰Ev 78, Ev 85

³¹Ev 87

³²Ev 128

³³http://www.reliefweb.int/fts_dev/reports/xls/OCHA_24_551.xls at 4 December 01

³⁴The data for pledges is taken from the DFID memorandum to the Committee dated 15 November. The data for committed funds is taken from the financial tracking data provided on the ReliefWeb web site and is sourced from UNOCHA. It was obtained on 4 December. There is not a straight read across from one set of figures to the other but they demonstrate that there is a significant difference between what is being pledged and what is being committed.

³⁵UN Consolidated Appeal, www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2001/afg/index.shtml

³⁶Q180

Overall total for 2001 Consolidated Appeal	42.84
---	--------------

Table 2: Summary of thematic group contributions to 2001 Consolidated Appeal³⁷

20. The Donor Alert only covers the period up to March 2002 when additional funding will be needed but even now, most items in the current donor alert are only part-funded (see table 3). On top of this, money will be needed to cover the longer-term reconstruction. **There is a desperate need to ensure that the Donor Alert is properly funded and that pledges are converted into resources: pledges alone cannot be spent.** No witness to our inquiry ventured an explanation of why donors were willing to make pledges but slow to convert them into cash. Sakandar Ali summed up the lack of funds saying “What I do know is that the money is not enough, even for the six months that we have asked for”³⁸.

Appealing Org.	Revised Requirements (US\$)	Total resources available (US\$)	Unmet Requirements (US\$)	% Covered
FAO	10,100,000	2,885,000	7,215,000	28.56
IOM	42,940,000	12,327,531	30,612,469	28.71
NGOs	29,450,000	2,083,472	27,366,528	7.07
OCHA	45,279,171	14,677,984	30,601,187	32.42
UNDCP	610,000	0	610,000	0.00
UNDP	35,750,000	250,000	35,500,000	0.70
UNFPA	8,215,000	8,215,000	0	100.00
UNHCR	108,000,000	63,352,555	44,647,445	58.66
UNICEF	108,948,000	39,773,873	69,174,127	36.51
UNSECOORD	1,168,950	1,168,950	0	100.00
WFP	257,335,553	207,711,897	49,623,656	80.72
WHO	14,098,542	5,406,742	8,691,800	38.35
TOTAL	661,895,216	357,853,004	304,042,212	54.06

Table 3: UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Afghanistan Donor Alert 2001 Summary of Requirements and Contributions – By Appealing Organization as of 10 December 2001³⁹

Funding humanitarian operations

21. Complex emergencies and natural disasters occur all over the world. The UN is often best placed to co-ordinate the international response to these crises. UNOCHA tracks the financial responses to the various donor alerts that are issued and make this information available on the ReliefWeb web site. Most of the complex emergencies that UNOCHA is currently tracking are under-funded (see table 4).

Complex Emergency	% Covered
Afghanistan	52.14
Angola	46.01
Balkans	49.07
Congo	37.17
DPR Korea	59.49
East Timor	73.78
Eritrea	59.52
Ethiopia	38.80
Great Lakes	31.48

³⁷The Deepening Crisis In Afghanistan, UNOCHA, August 2001

http://www.pcpafg.org/Programme/strategic_framework/The_Deepening_Crisis_in_Afghanistan_Aug_2001.shtml

³⁸Q93

³⁹http://www.reliefweb.int/fts_dev/reports/xls/OCHA_1_551.xls

Horn of Africa Drought	12.81
Indonesia - Maluku	31.14
Russian Federation - Chechnya	85.92
Sierra Leone	77.69
Somalia	20.63
Sudan	61.71
Tajikistan	47.08
West Africa	24.78
West Timor	58.56

Table 4: Funding of complex emergencies in 2001⁴⁰

22. Many of the UN agencies involved in the relief effort have to seek donations from bilateral donors and volunteers to fund their operations rather than receiving an assessed contribution. Operations are jeopardised when funds cannot be raised or when pledges are slow to be converted to hard commitments. **The UN is faced with an ever-increasing number of commitments around the world and is repeatedly having to seek funds from donors. It is inevitable that an element of donor fatigue will creep in as will the temptation for UN agencies to inflate their requests knowing they are likely only to receive a fraction of what they ask for. We believe it is time for the UN to review the way humanitarian operations are funded. We suggest assessed contributions providing the core funding topped up by voluntary appeals through donor alerts.**

23. Shortfalls in the funding of UN operations would be easier to overcome if more resources were available generally for development assistance and humanitarian operations. The UK, along with other OECD countries, is committed to the UN target of providing overseas development assistance amounting to 0.7 per cent of GNP, a target which has been met by Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. If the OECD's Development Assistance Committee's donors had reached their target of 0.7 per cent of GNP in 2000, overseas development assistance would have been US\$168.6 billion instead of the US\$53 billion it actually was. We welcome the Government's commitment to moving from the current 0.31 per cent towards the 0.7 per cent target, but urge faster progress, agreeing with Clare Short that if the UK is to persuade other countries – such as the United States which provides 0.1 per cent of GNP – to move in this direction “it has to get itself into a rather stronger leading position”⁴¹. **We recommend that the Government announces a timetable against which the UK intends to reach the 0.7 per cent target.**

24. As a result of the shortfall in funding, UN agencies have to make choices about what to cut from their programmes. As funding for the WFP and UNHCR in Pakistan was cut in the mid 1990s, the Afghan refugee programme had to be scaled down and the Government of Pakistan felt that it had been pushed into a position where its only option was to close its borders to prevent refugees arriving from Afghanistan. Donors seem unwilling to learn from their mistakes.

25. Most donors have staff on the ground who liaise directly with the UN agencies. The liaison personnel not only check on how donations are being used but are also able to offer advice, and to channel requests from donor governments for information. With

⁴⁰ Figures for Caucasus, Colombia, Iraq and Occupied Palestinian Territory were unavailable

⁴¹ Q221

bilateral aid, there are moves to streamline and harmonise donor requirements to lessen the burden on aid recipients of reporting back to many donors. **We recommend a similar streamlining of donor procedures in multilateral donations to reduce the burden on UN agencies particularly with regard to the large numbers of requests for additional information.**

The European Commission's contribution

26. The European Commission has provided €18.5 million for the Afghan crisis and a further €15 million is to be agreed shortly. The UK provides nineteen per cent of EC funds and the UK attributed share of the EC contribution is about £3.9 million⁴². Historically, EC development policy has lacked a poverty focus and has been especially weak on Asia. Clare Short said “Part of the EU’s complete failure to distribute its resources in proportion to the poor of the world is [there is] so little for Asia. In the Asia pot in their budgets they have got little. They are looking to be part of helping the reconstruction of Afghanistan and understanding quite well that the EU, which is a major source of development systems, ought to be there and ought to be helping”⁴³. **If the EC is to play an important part in the longer-term post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan it should re-evaluate its Asia aid programmes. At the very least, the Commission should ensure that the money it has pledged to the Afghan crisis is turned into firm commitments forthwith.**

DFID's contribution

27. Prior to September 11, DFID was working within the UN’s Strategic Framework for Afghanistan⁴⁴, which provided a principled approach to ensure assistance was focused on the needs of the most vulnerable. Between 1997 and September 2001 DFID provided £32 million for emergency food, shelter, healthcare, water supplies, support for agriculture, mines clearance, education, and monitoring and advocacy on human rights. The bulk of DFID’s programme was focused on providing assistance to the refugees in neighbouring countries⁴⁵. On September 11, DFID had sixteen commitments in the Afghanistan programme, totalling £5 million, of which ten projects were supporting refugee populations in Iran and Pakistan and only six were in Afghanistan (focusing on emergency relief but also food security)⁴⁶.

28. DFID has responded well to the current crisis. It was the first donor to respond to the inter-agency donor Alert and has been, after the USA, the second largest donor overall. DFID made £25 million available from existing funds on 19 September⁴⁷. Initial grants from the £25 million included:

- £1 million to UNOCHA to improve co-ordination
- £3 million to UNHCR for refugee assistance and protection

⁴²Ev 117, [Para 34]

⁴³Q224

⁴⁴Strategic Framework for Afghanistan: Towards a principled approach to peace and reconstruction, September 1998, www.pcpafg.org/programme/strategic_framework/

⁴⁵Ev 113, [Para 2]

⁴⁶Ev 113, [Paras 4–5]

⁴⁷Ev 114, [Para 9]

- £3 million to UNICEF for a programme preparing the vulnerable for winter
- £3 million to WFP for emergency feeding programmes
- £2 million to WHO for co-ordination, technical assistance and disease surveillance
- £3 million allocated to the Red Cross

29. On 28 September DFID announced £11 million was being made available to assist the poorer communities in Pakistan, particularly those most affected by the new influx of Afghan refugees. On 1 October DFID allocated £0.6 million of the £25 million to strengthening UN security arrangements (thus fully funding the UN security operation). By 12 October allocations to NGOs had been agreed with £21.5 million of the £25 million having been allocated to UN agencies, the Red Cross movement and NGOs. A further £15 million was made available on 18 October, from the Central Reserve, to remove blockages and help the international system respond to the needs of the Afghan people⁴⁸. A full listing of the humanitarian projects being supported by DFID at 15 November is contained in the evidence printed with this report⁴⁹. We were impressed that there was typically only four or five days between the approval of a disbursement and the funds being made available. We visited two projects in Pakistan which were already receiving money from DFID's £11 million programme. Inevitably, where there is a need for money to be spent quickly, the scope for evaluating whether projects will benefit the very poorest is limited. The Sarhad and Lady Health Worker projects are in our view sound choices. The fact that DFID was able to channel the money to projects so speedily is a vindication of its policy of maintaining an engagement in Pakistan despite the military coup of 1999.

30. In addition to the donations in cash and in kind, DFID has provided specialists to assist the UN agencies. We understand from talking to a number of people during our visit to the region that DFID's technical contributions were and are valued as highly as the cash donations it makes. DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Department is highly thought of by UN agencies and NGOs alike – deservedly so.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

The situation before September 11

31. The largest movement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the last couple of years, including during the current crisis, have been due primarily to food insecurity and not conflict. The UNHCR has reported that many people are already too weak or lack the resources to move from their villages – they are too weak even to become displaced⁵⁰. Table 5 shows the main refugee and IDP populations before September 11. The figure for refugees in Pakistan includes 1.2 million refugees residing in refugee villages and about 800,000 other Afghans integrated with the local population. The figure for Russia includes asylum-seekers pending temporary asylum. The number of refugees in North America and Australia can be broken down as follows: Canada – 9,300; USA – 4,300; Australia – 3,600. The figures for IDPs are UNOCHA figures and includes only people who have become

⁴⁸Ev 114, [Para 9]

⁴⁹Ev 119, Annex B

⁵⁰www.un.org/news/dh/20010917.htm

displaced since the summer of 2000. They do not include the sizeable numbers displaced earlier into Kabul or the Panjshir Valley from the Shomali region.

Location of	Number	Location of IDPs	From	Number
Iran	1,500,000	Badakshan	Nearby areas	94,000
Pakistan	2,000,000	Northern region	Nearby areas	387,000
Russia	1,000,00	Hazarajat region	Hazarajat/nearby	75,000
Central Asia	29,000	Herat	North west	200,000
Europe	36,000	Southern Provinces	Various	200,000
Nth.	17,000			
India	13,000			
TOTAL	3,695,000	TOTAL		956,000

Table 5: Main Populations of Afghan Refugees & Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) ⁵¹

Refugees

32. Large numbers of refugees fled Afghanistan in the wake of the Soviet invasion and subsequent factional fighting. The refugee situation is complex and unpredictable with some refugees returning to Afghanistan as others flee, while some remain permanently in exile. In recent years, movements of refugees in the region, although on a much larger scale than elsewhere in the world, are beginning to resemble the same complex mix of genuine refugees, migrant workers and others not considered in need of international protection⁵². Many of the refugees who have fled the country before or during this conflict have been skilled and educated people. This has had a knock-on effect for essential services like health and education inside Afghanistan⁵³.

⁵¹UNHCR Afghan Refugee Statistics, 10 Sept 2001,

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/81F3C45318379FABC1256ACB0039B878>

⁵²Islamic Republic of Iran in Short, UNHCR 2001 Global Appeal, www.unhcr.ch/pubs/fdrs/ga2001/irn.pdf

⁵³Ev 42, [Para 3]

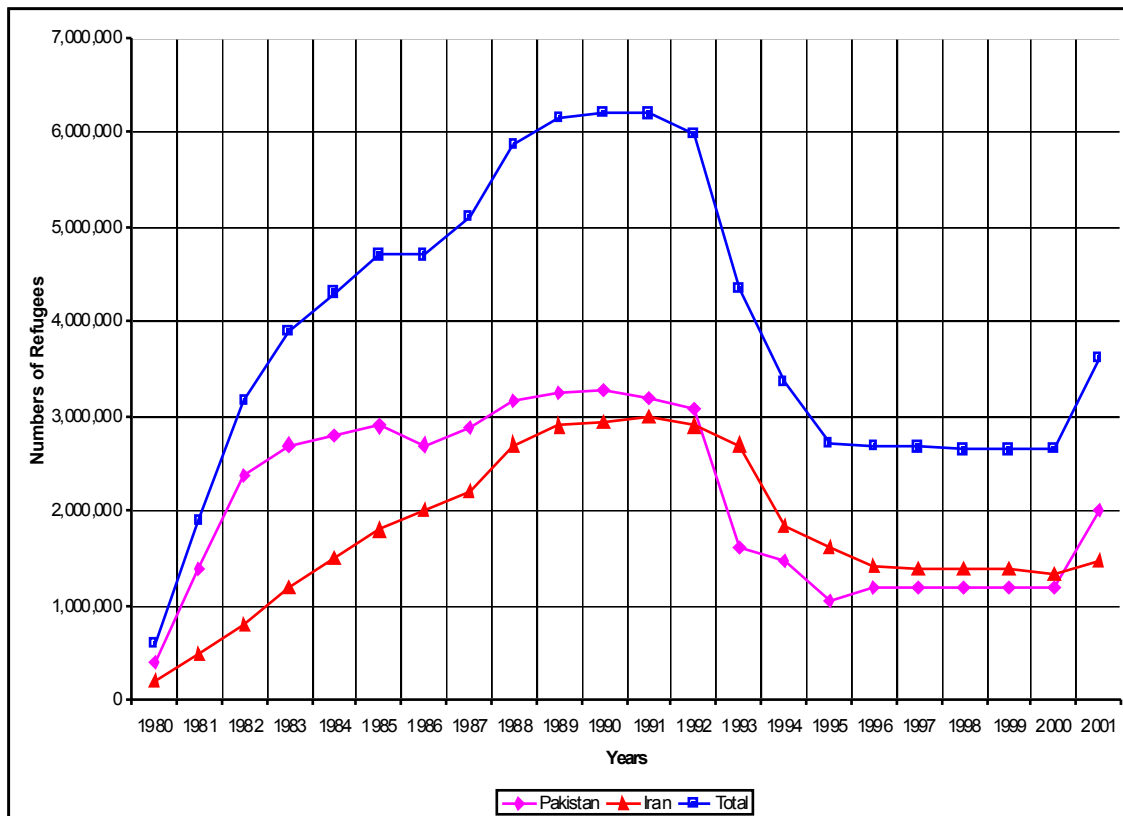


Figure 2: Afghan Refugee Populations, 1980-2001 (as of 1 January)⁵⁴. Note: the total in the graph includes refugees in Russia and the Central Asian Republics as well as those inside Pakistan and Iran. In addition to these figures, there are tens of thousands of Afghan refugees in other countries around the world. However, no accurate estimate of their total number exists.

33. Pakistan has been a generous host to between one and three million refugees for over twenty years. Donor fatigue is a familiar term but in Pakistan they talk of host fatigue too. Dr Mukarji said “We need to recognise what [the Government of Pakistan has] done for over 20 years with two, almost three million refugees with their own resources and their own capacity and their own willingness to cope...”⁵⁵. The population peaked in the early 1990s before large numbers of refugees returned to Afghanistan following the fall of the Najibullah government. Although the UNHCR has always supported the refugees, the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Mohammad Naeem Kahn, told us during our visit to Peshawar that there was a noticeable decline in interest in refugee issues in the late 1980s with the signing of the Geneva Peace Accords and the Soviet withdrawal. He further explained that 1995 was the crucial year in the relationship between the Government of Pakistan and the international community over refugees. UNHCR funding was being cut and services in camps were being withdrawn. For the Government of Pakistan, the watershed came when the WFP stopped providing free food to refugees in September 1995. Increasingly, the burden of supporting the refugees fell on the Government of Pakistan. Donor fatigue led to a lack of UNHCR and WFP resources resulting in programme cutbacks which in part were intended to stimulate the spontaneous repatriation of the refugee population. At about the same time there was an influx of refugees from the northeast of

⁵⁴UNHCR Afghan refugee statistics 10 Sept 2001, <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/81F3C45318379FABC1256ACB0039B878>

⁵⁵Q94

Afghanistan with the fall of Taloqan to the Taliban. Cutbacks in funding left the UNHCR unable to cope with the sudden influx. (The UNHCR used to maintain an emergency reserve to cover such eventualities but donors had not contributed to it for a number of years). Abbas Sarfraz Khan, the Minister for Kashmir, Northern Areas, SAFRON and Housing Works with responsibility for afghan refugees told us that it was at this point that refugees, having realised they could no longer get WFP support, began leaving the camps and moving to cities. **The cutbacks in refugee programmes by UN agencies provoked a reaction from the Government of Pakistan which closed its borders and began deporting refugees. Thus, a lack of interest by the donor community at a crucial juncture destroyed almost twenty years of goodwill, and created the lasting legacy of today's closed border policy.**

Refugees in the current crisis

34. Afghanistan's neighbours have all maintained closed border policies despite appeals by the international community and UN agencies, particularly the UNHCR, for borders to be opened. The closed border policies stem from the international community's lack of support for the countries who have borne large refugee populations for a very long time but they also reflect security concerns about the destabilising effect of large outflows of Afghans on the surrounding region.

35. It is thought that some 100,000 to 135,000 refugees have crossed into Pakistan since September 11⁵⁶. Many either had visas or paid smugglers to get them across the border – neither option would be open to the poorest and most vulnerable families. The communities on either side of the border are very closely linked and most of the refugees are integrated into the local community or are housed in existing camps. Despite the Government of Pakistan's rigid closed border policy, a few of the most vulnerable refugees have been allowed to cross and are being looked after in the Killi Faizo staging camp in Balochistan. Pakistani authorities monitor the official border crossings but there are numerous unofficial crossings where most of the refugees entered Pakistan. These refugees are the 'invisible' refugees – they are not registered and have no access to the facilities provided to other refugees in camps.

36. The Government of Pakistan has delegated responsibility for siting new refugee camps to provincial and tribal authorities; they in turn have been determined that new camps should be remote from existing refugee populations and close to the border. The process for establishing the camps has been bureaucratic and slow. Given the history of the international community's support for Pakistan's refugee legacy, it is hardly surprising that the Government of Pakistan is not eager to establish new camps. However, there has been some progress in establishing camps; a small number have been opened in the federally-administered tribal areas in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan and one in Balochistan. The Government of Iran has shown a similar reluctance to set up new camps with most of the sites it offered being in a no-man's land between the Iranian and Afghan borders.

37. The one and a half million refugees originally anticipated never materialised. Sakandar Ali of Islamic Relief gave a number of reasons for this: the treacherous journey

⁵⁶Ev 116, [Para 27]

to get to the border; the lack of money to transport often large families; and the widespread knowledge that borders were closed⁵⁷. Despite the difficulties in establishing camps, it appears that there is now sufficient assistance being provided in Iran and Pakistan to cope with current refugee numbers and any foreseeable exodus (the UNHCR has capacity to handle another 350,000 refugees in Pakistan). Coping with them now and dealing with them in the longer term are two different things. **We can understand Iran and Pakistan's reluctance to accept large numbers of refugees; donors must ensure that the long-term refugee problem that faces both countries is resolved as part of the reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan.** Only through responsible behaviour on the part of the international community and donors can the trust of the governments of Iran and Pakistan be regained and a recurrence of the problems posed by their closed border policies avoided.

38. During the Kosovo refugee crisis, the UNHCR was thought to have adopted an unnecessarily defensive approach, a bunker mentality. This time, UNHCR's response in Afghanistan, to its credit, has been more open. UNHCR told us during our visit that it had learned a number of lessons in Kosovo and was now trying to engage more with donors, be open to challenges and debate, be more honest about operational constraints and be more sympathetic to the concerns of host governments. It also felt that it had been able to better plan and prepare for this crisis.

IDPs and stranded vulnerable populations

39. During this crisis, most of the vulnerable people chose to remain in their homes, lacking the resources or strength to become displaced. These people are referred to as internally stranded or 'stuck'; people with little or no access to food and water at home but who lack the assets or strength to move elsewhere to seek assistance⁵⁸. Those who have had to move have become displaced rather than fleeing the country as refugees. Sakandar Ali noted that where people had a choice they preferred to remain with friends and family while recognising that this imposed a burden on already stretched households. He was concerned that such local coping mechanisms would eventually start to break down⁵⁹.

40. The UN estimates that there are between five and seven and a half million vulnerable people inside Afghanistan. This estimate may increase once there is access to those areas still affected by conflict and an assessment is made of numbers of people who have been displaced by the conflict or whose livelihoods have been further damaged. Table 6 shows a breakdown of refugees, IDPs and Internally Stranded Persons (ISPs).

Refugees in Iran pre-11 September	1,500,000
Refugees in Pakistan pre-11 September	2,000,000
Refugees elsewhere in region pre-11 September	195,000
New refugees in Pakistan since 11 September	100,000
New refugees in Iran since 11 September	20,000
Current estimated Internally Displaced (IDPs)	1,200,000
Current estimated Internally Stranded (ISPs)	4,150,000

⁵⁷Q76

⁵⁸In their memorandum DFID included a colour map showing IDP and ISP locations at 13 November. This is reproduced Vol II, Ev 124, [Annex F] of the evidence.

⁵⁹Q76

Subtotal	5,470,000
UN projected further IDPs/ISPs	2,000,000
Projected Vulnerable Total	7,500,000 (rounded)

Table 6: Populations in need of humanitarian assistance/protection⁶⁰
(All figures should be treated with caution)

41. There has been a complex pattern of displacement within Afghanistan as a result of the drought and then the conflict. The initial movement was the result of drought but this was followed by a second displacement away from urban areas towards either the border or rural areas⁶¹. This second movement of people was driven by fear, conflict and bombing. It is difficult to get a clear picture of the current IDP situation but IDPs seem to be clustered around a dozen locations with a small number in camps around Herat, Chaman and Jalalabad. The largest concentrations of IDPs are near Jalalabad and Mazar-e Sharif, with fewer in the south near Qalat, Kandahar and Spin Boldak⁶². The situation is changing rapidly and there is still no clear information on the impact that the fall of the Taliban and the advance of the Northern Alliance has had on IDP numbers. In its memorandum, DFID said that military developments were allowing some people to return home⁶³ but in November there was some evidence of new displacements away from areas of ongoing conflict (Kandahar, Kunduz, Mazar-e Sharif). It is certainly true that the people displaced because of conflict will return home once security around their homes improves. However, those people displaced because of food shortages are unlikely to return home unless they can be sure of access to the food they need. Friends and relatives are supporting many of the IDPs. This must have an impact on the food stocks that these families have set aside for the winter and could lead to a further food shortages and a weakening of traditional coping mechanisms.

Camps inside Afghanistan

42. With Pakistan's and Iran's borders closed there were build-ups, in the border areas, of people trying to flee. In response, two camps, Makaki and Mile 46, were established by the Iranian Red Crescent inside Afghanistan near the Iranian border and one camp was established near Chaman at Spin Boldak. The UNHCR was unwilling to provide support for these camps as there were no systems in place to ensure the civilian nature of the camps and no safeguards to prevent the Taliban or the Northern Alliance from using the camps as recruiting grounds. Where humanitarian relief is needed, an appropriate humanitarian space has to be created. Rwanda provides an only too clear example of the problems caused by military infiltration in to refugee or IDP camps.

Food and Non-food aid

Background to the food crisis

43. Before the country was ravaged by conflict and civil war, agriculture was the bedrock of the Afghan economy. It was the main source of national output and

⁶⁰DFID Afghanistan Crisis: Situation Report, 28 November 2001

⁶¹Q76

⁶²DFID included a map of IDP populations in its memorandum. See Ev 124, [Annex F]

⁶³Ev 115, [Para 25]

employment, with about eighty-five per cent of the population directly dependent on agriculture⁶⁴. The main crops were grain, rice, fruits, nuts and vegetables. There was a mix of subsistence and commercial farming and Afghanistan exported fruit, nuts and vegetables. Wheat was the main food crop, accounting for about three quarters of food grain production. Other important food crops included rice, maize and barley. Potatoes and various fruit crops were also produced, both for domestic consumption and as cash crops. Afghan dried fruits (mainly almonds and apricots) accounted for sixty percent of the world market in 1982, but declined to around sixteen percent in 1990 and has continued to decline (although the products are still important foreign exchange earners)⁶⁵. Today much of the arable land in Afghanistan has been damaged by war and neglect. About twelve per cent of the country's total land is arable, with three per cent under forest cover, about forty-six per cent under permanent pastures, and the rest (thirty-nine per cent) being mountains. About half of the cultivable area is irrigated, while the other half is arid or rainfed. The destruction or deterioration of irrigation infrastructure means that the area under effective irrigation is now substantially lower⁶⁶. The country is suffering its worst drought in thirty years⁶⁷. There is widespread malnutrition (forty-five to sixty per cent prevalence). In its memorandum DFID said that there was no indication of significant famine-related death yet⁶⁸, although recent situation reports suggest some famine-related deaths and severe malnutrition have been recorded⁶⁹.

44. Around 500,000 of the most needy people are located in the north and centre of the country⁷⁰ where this year's harvest provided food for less than three months. Catherine Bertini of the WFP said "In the north, where the people are most at risk, there are people in pre-famine conditions due to the drought, due to the conflict and due to the poverty to begin with"⁷¹. In other areas that were less affected by the drought, the harvest yielded food for between six and nine months. Although these areas currently do not require the same level of food aid as the severely affected areas, larger numbers of people will become increasingly dependant on food aid early in the new year as their food stocks are depleted⁷².

The WFP Regional Emergency Operation

45. As the drought persisted and widespread food shortage became more extreme the WFP accelerated its programmes. These existing programmes were consolidated within a new WFP regional emergency operation (EMOP), 'Emergency Food Assistance to Refugees and Vulnerable Populations in Afghanistan', launched as an integral component of the UN inter-agency Donor Alert. The EMOP was targeted on seven and a half million beneficiaries. It outlined a requirement for 493,801 tonnes of food (a net shipping requirement of 332,914 tonnes once food already in the pipeline or the region had been

⁶⁴Special alert, no. 315, FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission to Afghanistan, 7 June 2001

⁶⁵Special alert, no. 315, FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission to Afghanistan, 7 June 2001

⁶⁶Special alert, no. 315, FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission to Afghanistan, 7 June 2001

⁶⁷Ev 42, [Para 2 and 3]

⁶⁸Ev 115, [Para 18]

⁶⁹DFID Afghanistan Crisis Situation Report, 25 November 2001

⁷⁰Ev 115, [Para 18]

⁷¹Q179

⁷²DFID included a WFP map in their evidence, (see Vol II Ev 122, [Annex D]) showing levels of food insecurity in September 2001 across Afghanistan based on survey data from their Vulnerability and Mapping Unit (VAM).

taken into account). The EMOP covered the same period as the donor alert. Based on the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment and the WFP's own vulnerability data, the WFP estimated that it would need to ship 52,000 tonnes per month from October onwards in the period leading up to winter. This would replenish stocks inside Afghanistan to allow current feeding programmes to continue and build a stockpile for the winter in areas likely to be cut off⁷³. This equates to just over 1,700 tonnes per day or 12,000 per week. The target figure was expected to rise as the number of people needing food aid increased (once those with only 0-3 month food deficit needed food aid early in the New Year).

Actions by the World Food Programme

46. There had been a massive increase in the scale of the WFP operation in Afghanistan in the three years before the events of September 11. In 1999-2000 the WFP provided 80,000 tonnes of food to 1.25 million beneficiaries but in 2001-2002 were planning to ship 360,000 tonnes of food and distribute it to 5.5 million beneficiaries. During our visit to Pakistan, the WFP told us it was assisting the following groups inside Afghanistan:

- Drought affected rural populations	4 to 6 million
- Drought IDPs (both inside and outside camps)	500,000 to 800,000
- Conflict IDPs	150,000 to 250,000
- Malnourished vulnerable	200,000
- Urban conflict-affected ⁷⁴	2,000,000 then 400,000
- New conflict IDPs	200,000 to 250,000

47. Before the crisis precipitated by September 11, the World Food Programme was investing in women's bakeries and was working on a range of food aid activities including food-for-work and food-for-education schemes, free distributions of food to drought victims, institutional feeding in hospitals and orphanages, support for IDPs and the assisted return of IDPs to their homes⁷⁵.

48. The WFP is now working to replenish stocks inside Afghanistan, support pre-September 11 programmes, pre-position food stocks for any potential refugee flows and feeding of existing refugees in neighbouring countries. During our visit, WFP also outlined the following actions in the immediate future:

- Continuation of free food distributions to drought affected populations and the extension of the coverage of these food distributions to populations suffering food shortages in January – April 2002 due to drought.
- Assistance for drought and conflict IDPs
- Supplementary feeding for the malnourished
- General post-conflict urban distributions (provide one-off food distributions for those in urban areas affected by conflict)
- Assisted return of conflict IDPs as soon as possible and drought affected IDPs by March 2002

⁷³In his evidence, Sakandar Ali presented a map (Q82) showing immediate food aid in priority food insecure districts based on WFP VAM data but also including details of areas likely to be cut off in the winter. See foldout map on inside front cover of Volume II

⁷⁴After a one-off food distribution 400,000 will require ongoing support

⁷⁵Ev 85

49. The WFP indicated that it would be directly involved in urban post-conflict reconstruction through food-for-work programmes. It is also working on operations in neighbouring countries like Tajikistan and is appealing for additional funds from donors⁷⁶.

The logistics of food and non-food deliveries

50. The WFP is responsible for the distribution of food to vulnerable populations that need it. It often sub-contracts this work to NGOs and local partners who have a greater presence in local communities and are better informed about the specific needs within these communities. Food is shipped from WFP warehouses in neighbouring countries to WFP logistic hubs, which are often located in urban areas (such as Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Kandahar etc.). This is known as primary distribution. Secondary distribution is the process of distributing food from these warehouses to the NGOs and local partners who will then carry out the actual distribution to the vulnerable populations. Catherine Bertini said “The NGOs are the real champions in this country. It is their national staff who took the food from the WFP warehouses and distributed it. There was food there. That does not mean that the systems were all perfect because a lot of staff – local staff and NGOs and WFP – were not able to work, but to the extent there were people working there was food there to distribute”⁷⁷.

51. The logistics of food distribution in Afghanistan are difficult; there are few good paved roads and many roads are impassable in winter. Land mines, cluster bombs and unexploded ordnance hamper distribution and difficult terrain means that every mode of transport available from airlifts to mule caravans has to be used⁷⁸. The WFP has responded well to the logistical challenge and is bringing in additional trucking capacity and a number of 4x4 short-haul five tonne trucks to aid secondary distribution. They have also secured the use of snow ploughs and bulldozers to keep the roads affected by winter open as long as possible. The extra trucking capacity will be primarily deployed in the northern corridor food pipeline.

52. Opportunities for using the northern corridor food pipeline opened up as a result of the rapid advance of the Northern Alliance and the collapse of the Taliban. Food is currently being trans-shipped from Bandar-e Abbas in Iran along the northern corridor to supply Afghanistan from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The northern corridor food pipeline is not yet running smoothly and although some food has arrived in Iran it has yet to reach Afghanistan’s northern neighbours. Uzbekistan’s closed border policy was hampering efforts to get large quantities of aid across the border at Termez. In the interim, the WFP has maintained shipments from Nasir Bagh depot in Peshawar (while the route through Quetta and Chaman is closed) and is purchasing additional supplies of wheat in Kazakhstan to supplement food already in the northern corridor pipeline. It has made some use of airlifts into Faizabad.

53. Ideally the WFP would like to move sixty per cent of the food requirement into Afghanistan through the northern corridor. But there are logistical difficulties and at the

⁷⁶Ev 86

⁷⁷Q134

⁷⁸Ev 86

time of writing this report eighty per cent of the food flowing into Afghanistan is coming in from Pakistan. Despite some instability, deliveries are continuing along the Peshawar-Kabul-central highlands route. The route in from Quetta through Chaman and on to Herat is closed temporarily because of security concerns. The WFP is hoping to increase deliveries through the northern corridor pipeline along the following routes:

- Turkmenabad to Andkhoy and on to the Northwest
- Turkmenabad to Kushka and on to Herat
- Termez to Mazar-e Sharif and into the Central Highlands
- Termez to Kunduz and into the North East
- Termez to Kunduz and into the Panjshir Valley

Pause in the bombing

54. It was clear that early on in the crisis insufficient food was going into the country. As the coalition's bombardment of the Taliban intensified and the security situation worsened and delivery levels dropped further, a number of the international NGOs began to call for a pause in the bombing. This was an understandable call to make from a humanitarian point of view but the governments involved in the military action had to weigh it against the military consequences. In reality, it was a call for a cessation of hostilities and we agree with the Secretary of State that the call was a mistake. **Once the WFP had adapted its procedures⁷⁹ the insecurity in the country and not the bombing by coalition forces seemed to be the major barrier to primary and secondary food distribution.**

Bypassing the urban logistic hubs

55. When Sakandar Ali gave evidence at the end of October he said the UN needed to develop alternative delivery mechanisms, as international staff were unable to return to the country⁸⁰. The WFP was already adapting its procedures to try to deliver more food into Afghanistan by allowing primary distributions to bypass the main urban logistic hubs and deliver directly to the NGOs and agencies responsible for secondary distribution and distribution to the intended beneficiaries in rural areas. In its memorandum, DFID said that the impact of the renewed focus of getting food into the country was that 27,000 tonnes was despatched in October and that the average daily target of 1,700 tonnes was being exceeded⁸¹. This was a short-lived improvement as the security situation deteriorated in the face of the Taliban collapse and the advance of the Northern Alliance.

Primary distribution, secondary distribution and distribution to vulnerable populations

56. There has been a great deal of emphasis on getting food into Afghanistan particularly with the threat of a severe winter, high levels of insecurity and the need to make up for the period of ten days when no food was shipped into the country. Stockpiles in the WFP logistic hubs (see table 7) enabled some secondary distribution and distribution to vulnerable populations to continue even when no food was being moved into Afghanistan.

⁷⁹See paragraph 53

⁸⁰Q102

⁸¹Ev 115, [Para 19]

Location	Opening Stock as of 11 September 2001 (tonnes)	Total Released 11-30 September 2001 (tonnes)	Opening Stock as of 1 Oct 2001 (tonnes)
Kabul	6044	3939	2966
Mazar-e Sharif	822	987	110
Andkhai	302	536	0
Kandahar	1603	133	1640
Faizabad	494	443	221
Herat	3956	5435	798
Jalalabad	800	0	800
Panishir	936	936	439
Total in Afghanistan	14957	12408	6974

Table 7: WFP stock in Afghan Warehouses and Releases 11-30 September 2001⁸².

57. It is one thing to get food into the country, but quite another to distribute that food to the intended beneficiaries. DFID's best assessment was that food, by and large, was reaching those for whom it was intended⁸³. In their supplementary memorandum, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief were careful to draw a distinction between delivery and distribution and went on to say that insecurity had a particularly negative impact on distribution. They highlighted the provinces of Ghor and Badghis as being badly affected with little food distribution since September 11. Access in both provinces is badly affected in the winter⁸⁴.

58. We have been impressed with the response by the WFP and the flexibility it has shown in the face of difficult circumstances. Clare Short said "... the World Food Programme has performed magnificently in some of the most difficult circumstances anyone has seen, in terms of humanitarian crises with military dimensions"⁸⁵. The WFP was unable to deliver food into Afghanistan for ten days in the middle of September; despatches of food from external hubs ceased on September 11 and recommenced on 25 September when warehouses in Kabul, Herat, Andkhai and Kandahar were resupplied. In Mazar-e Sharif and Faizabad the WFP borrowed food from NGO partners' stocks to continue secondary distributions. During the period when no food was flowing into Afghanistan, NGOs were very critical of the WFP. Although primary distribution has been interrupted on a number of occasions there has only been one WFP warehouse in Afghanistan that has had no food⁸⁶ (see table 7). The WFP did acknowledge that there were problems with secondary distribution and distribution to the intended beneficiaries and that the situation was hampered by a lack of staff and poor communications. The WFP has a track record of being able to distribute food in the winter and we believe it will be able to do so in this case. It has an impressive logistics operation that is almost certain to ensure that targets for primary distribution are met. However, **we remain to be convinced that the food delivered into Afghanistan can be distributed to all those in need, primarily because of poor security**. In their supplementary memorandum, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief pointed out that insecurity was the most critical factor affecting the delivery and distribution of food aid⁸⁷. **If the security problems cannot be**

⁸²Ev 103-4

⁸³Ev 115, [Para 20]

⁸⁴Ev 49

⁸⁵Q190

⁸⁶Q134 and Q146

⁸⁷Ev 49

resolved and food distributed, there may be a need to resort to less successful methods such as airdrops or risk further displacements of population, which in the winter could be catastrophic. It appears that food is counted as being distributed once it is handed over to NGOs for distribution rather than when the NGOs report back that distribution is complete. **We believe that food should not be counted as distributed until NGOs and local partners contracted to carry out the distribution have confirmed that the food has been distributed.**

59. Christian Aid and Islamic Relief told us they were concerned about the absence of delivery and distribution networks “as an essential component of a comprehensive humanitarian strategy”⁸⁸. **Secondary distribution has been the weakness in the current crisis. The security situation and absence of international staff have hampered secondary distribution more than primary distribution. However, we have not seen any evidence to suggest that secondary distribution is being ignored; the WFP has demonstrated a flexible approach by allowing urban logistic hubs to be bypassed and securing additional trucking capacity.**

60. Distribution rates improved when the WFP began bypassing urban hubs and delivering directly to rural areas on 20 October⁸⁹. As many rural areas are controlled by only one or other of the warring parties they are often more secure than the towns. Despite this, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief claim that distributions have been relatively more effective in urban areas. The fact that distribution is unverifiable in many rural areas gives rise to continuing humanitarian concern. They also suggested that improvements in liaison between the WFP and the military had helped to reassure lorry drivers about the level of risk they faced from the coalition bombing⁹⁰, aiding primary distribution.

Non-food needs

61. It takes a long time for a person to starve to death but in a weakened state and without shelter or adequate bedding, hypothermia can kill in a night. Food is often used as a shorthand by the aid agencies to refer to both food and non-food items. While eighty per cent of the need for shelter, blankets and warm clothing is being met⁹¹, there is a need to ensure that other non-food needs are properly addressed. Only forty per cent of the immediate health needs had been met at the time DFID submitted their memorandum to the Committee⁹². Much of the planning was based on figures that had not taken into account the numbers of people displaced as a result of the conflict. There is still some evidence to suggest that people are dying from a lack of shelter⁹³ and steps need to be taken urgently to ensure that non-food items are distributed to those in need.

⁸⁸Ev 21, [Para 10]

⁸⁹Ev 50

⁹⁰Ev 51

⁹¹Ev 115, [Para 21]

⁹²Ev 115, [Para 22]

⁹³Médecins Sans Frontiers, Press Briefing, Afghanistan, 5 December 2001.

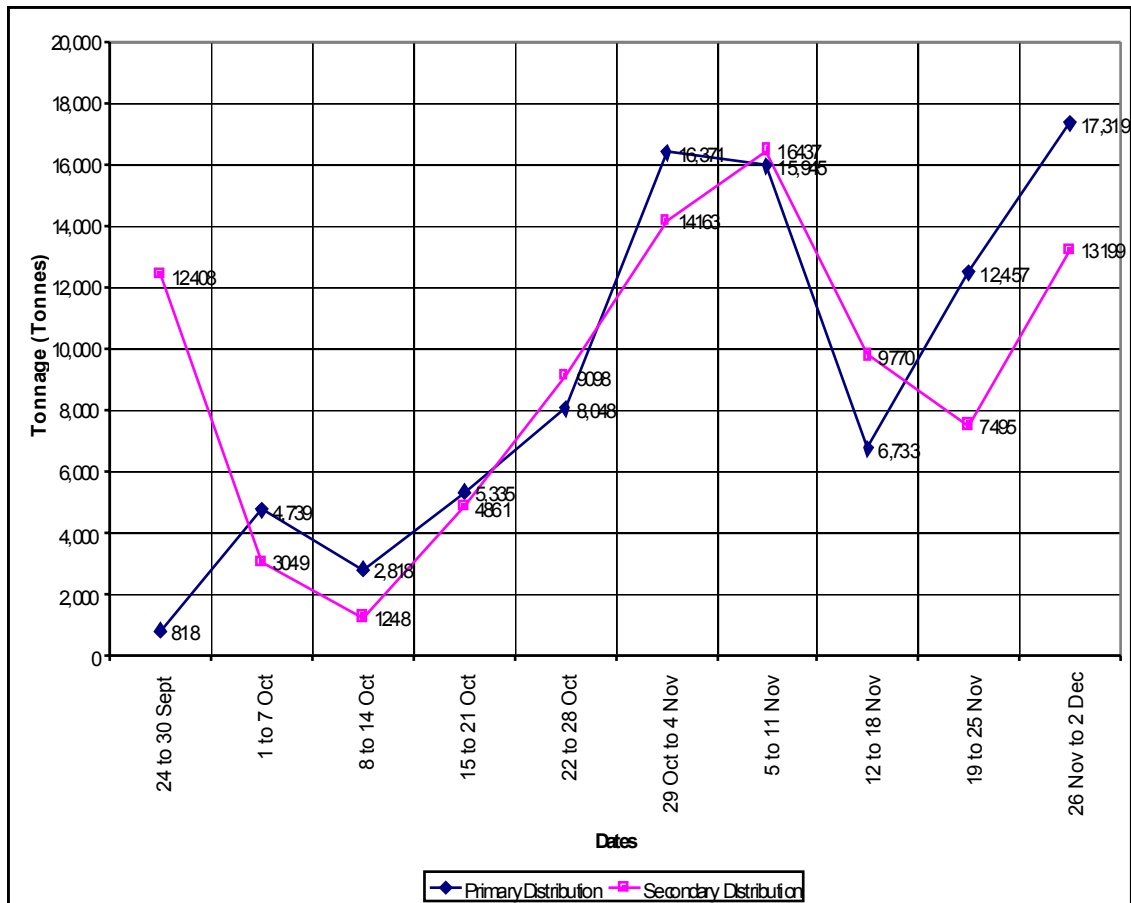


Figure 3: Primary and Secondary Distribution in Afghanistan⁹⁴.

Purchasing surplus food locally

62. Much of the food available to the WFP for Afghanistan has come from the USA (about sixty-five per cent⁹⁵), which makes the bulk of its donations in kind. There is a surplus of wheat available in the region, particularly within Iran, India and Pakistan. Pakistan has made available 350,000 tonnes to the WFP as a loan of which the WFP has taken up 115,000 tonnes. The WFP also purchased 23,000 tonnes of wheat in Pakistan and 34,000 tonnes for the northern corridor food pipeline in Kazakhstan. India has pledged one million tonnes of wheat over five years. The in-kind donation from the USA removes the need to buy locally – something the WFP would prefer to do. Local purchasing would help to stimulate local economies and the food could probably be made available earlier than food being shipped from the USA. In relation to Afghanistan it also appears to provide better value for money. DFID's cash contribution to WFP has been used to buy wheat in Pakistan for US\$130 a tonne. Armand Doli, the WFP's logistics manager, told us in Islamabad that the shipping costs from the USA (which the United States Government pays in addition to purchasing food in the United States) are about US\$110 per tonne on US flagged vessels or US\$50 per tonne on other ships. Bulk food purchases have to be carefully managed; there is a danger that large local purchases could distort markets⁹⁶. **We believe that donors should be working to allow the WFP to make greater use of local**

⁹⁴ Figures sourced from DFID Situation Reports of 5 and 7 December

⁹⁵ Q181

⁹⁶ Q86 and Q87

purchases by giving cash rather than in-kind contributions. This should not be an inflexible rule and there may well be times when the in-kind contributions are needed, but greater flexibility in the way donors respond would be welcome. **DFID should continue making cash contributions wherever possible. Such a policy will maximise the value for money of the UK's contribution by providing the greatest utility to the aid agencies.** We welcome Clare Short's comments that "There were distortions in food aid because a lot of countries are offloading their surplus foods. The UK gives money to buy in the region, which also helps the region and means you buy more appropriate food, the food that people are used to. Other countries send ship loads of food and often it is not the food that people want. When I visited the refugees from Sierra Leone in Guinea they had bulgar wheat or something and they are rice eaters. You have lost everything and then someone gives you some food you have never known, you do not know how to cook. That goes on in the international system and that is a problem. We need to untie international food aid, which is one of our objectives for better quality aid"⁹⁷.

Regional Considerations

63. The drought has had an impact on the whole region, notably Balochistan in Pakistan, Sistan Baluchistan in Iran and Tajikistan. Tajikistan faces a severe food crisis of its own as a result of the drought. Cereal production in 2000 was down by forty-six per cent compared to 1999 and will be sufficient to meet the national requirements for only three months. There is a risk that if food aid is not provided there could be widespread migration and even renewed conflict in a country still recovering from a five-year civil war. The WFP has launched an emergency operation to provide 126,000 tonnes of food to cover the nine months shortfall for up to 1.16 million people. The total cost of this operation is US\$62 million and is now nearly fully funded⁹⁸.

US Military food drops of humanitarian daily rations

64. The US military is thought to have spent some \$46 million on dropping over two million humanitarian daily ration packs by air⁹⁹. At best this was a waste of resources and at worst it was dangerous. Little control can be had over where the food ends up, whether in a minefield or in the wrong hands; ration packs can only be collected by the fittest and are likely to be taken by the strongest not the needy. There have been reports of children straying into minefields to collect the parcels. The food itself is of little use unless the recipient knows how to use it – and the written instructions the packs carry are of limited use in a country where sixty-four per cent of the population is illiterate. We agree with Christian Aid and Islamic Relief that dropping these packs diverted attention from the co-ordinated humanitarian strategy¹⁰⁰. We see little point in this exercise even as a hearts and minds strategy; most of the food aid in Afghanistan is from the USA and clearly marked as such. **We believe that the money spent on dropping humanitarian daily rations would have been better spent through the co-ordinated donor response.**

⁹⁷Q226

⁹⁸WFP Tajikistan EMOP 6288.00

⁹⁹USAID Central Asia Region, Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #32 Dec 3, 2001

¹⁰⁰Ev 21, [Para 8]

4. Context for Humanitarian Assistance in the current crisis

Need for stability/law and order

65. **Everyone we spoke to, whether in London or Pakistan, stressed to us that the most serious barrier to humanitarian assistance has been and remains poor security.** Delivering assistance in Afghanistan has never been easy with insecurity and harassment among a number of obstacles placed in the path of aid workers by the warring factions¹⁰¹. In its memorandum, the WFP said that maintaining law and order on supply routes was critical to the continued success of efforts to move food and non-food items into Afghanistan¹⁰². There have been many examples of incidents involving international and national NGOs and aid agencies whose goods were looted or stolen, or whose staff were threatened and intimidated by either the Taliban, the Northern Alliance or by bandits and thieves. There is a danger that in the absence of law and order, aid agencies will become a target¹⁰³. **Security needs to extend to the secondary distribution network as well as to the supply route into Afghanistan. Delivering food into the country is not enough – it must be distributed as well.**

66. Along with its memorandum DFID submitted its 100 day plan, ‘Afghanistan – Recovery: An emergency plan for the first 100 days’¹⁰⁴. It will have to be implemented against the background of a poor security situation. It had defined Mazar-e Sharif as a key initial supply base for expanded humanitarian action in the central highlands¹⁰⁵ but recent reports indicate that fighting in the area continues and at the time of writing this report UN staff were being withdrawn.

International humanitarian law and the protection of humanitarian relief workers

67. International humanitarian law sets out the key principles governing humanitarian assistance: neutrality, impartiality and independence. In complex emergencies of the kind occurring in Afghanistan there is a complex dynamic between the political (or diplomatic), military and humanitarian responses to a crisis. Unless a careful balance is struck, humanitarian aid workers can find that:

- they are exposed in a conflict situation with little military or political support; or
- the principles of humanitarian assistance and a humanitarian space to work in are threatened by excessive military and political interference.

68. In Somalia and Bosnia there were attempts to use the military to protect humanitarian corridors. While this provided protection for the humanitarian workers and the relief supplies it did not provide protection for non-combatants. To be effective, humanitarian corridors require acceptance by all sides in the conflict. In Iraq, military intervention was used to create safe havens which had the advantage of protecting non-

¹⁰¹Ev 113, [Para 2]

¹⁰²Ev 85

¹⁰³Ev 2

¹⁰⁴Ev 125 [Annex G]

¹⁰⁵Ev 126, [Annex 9, Para 6]

combatants as well as the humanitarian workers. It is hard to avoid humanitarian principles being compromised by the involvement of the military. Where there is direct military help to the humanitarian operation there is an even greater risk of partisan use of humanitarian aid undermining the humanitarian principles. Military involvement needs to be underwritten by a UN mandate if humanitarian principles are to be preserved. In Rwanda and Southern Sudan there was no military involvement in the humanitarian response. But while humanitarian principles were safeguarded humanitarian personnel and non-combatants were exposed to danger¹⁰⁶. The situation in Afghanistan contains elements of all of the above cases. There is clearly some degree of co-operation between the humanitarian relief effort and the military but there is no direct protection of aid workers or non-combatants. Calls for an international or UN-led peace keeping or peace enforcing military deployment were initially resisted by members of the coalition¹⁰⁷ and by parties in Afghanistan. There is no one single solution and further research is needed on how military and humanitarian needs can be reconciled. It is vital that the international community works to encourage peace and stability and avoids actions that could lead to greater insecurity and intensified civil war¹⁰⁸ – something the West has failed to do in the past with not one peaceful transition of government in Afghanistan in over thirty years.

69. UN and humanitarian workers deserve greater protection. Ross Mountain of UNOCHA told us “We have lost more civilian humanitarian staff than the UN have lost peacekeepers”¹⁰⁹. International humanitarian law covers non-combatants but there may be a case for explicitly making attacks on humanitarian workers a crime under international law. Ross Mountain of UNOCHA, suggested that the International Criminal Court had an article on the assassination of humanitarian workers¹¹⁰. **We invite the Government to set out the measures in place for the protection of humanitarian aid workers in international law and to outline its policies for ensuring greater protection of aid workers and non-combatants in complex emergencies.** While laws are important for the protection of aid workers, so is security. More money is needed by the UN for its own security measures¹¹¹ and we were pleased to see that DFID had prioritised security by fully funding the UN security operation in Afghanistan. Improved UN security would be cost-effective as well. We were struck by the number of UN personnel waiting in Pakistan for security approval to be given to allow them to take up their posts in Afghanistan

Co-ordination of the aid effort

70. The aid effort needs be co-ordinated internationally, nationally and regionally. There are a large number of humanitarian actors on the ground whose response needs to be co-ordinated if effort and resources are not to be wasted. Part of the co-ordination is the relationship with local authorities in particular regions. CARE international told us that prior to September 11 they had been able to work and cooperate effectively with the Taliban and that there had been no interference in humanitarian activities¹¹². Oxfam reported a good relationship with the civilian administration but said there were difficulties

¹⁰⁶We are grateful to Simon Maxwell for his help with the analysis of the various options for military intervention

¹⁰⁷Guardian, 4/12/01

¹⁰⁸Ev 4

¹⁰⁹Q185

¹¹⁰Q187

¹¹¹Q185 and Q186

¹¹²Q5

with the various militias who had been involved in looting¹¹³. It is, as yet, unclear how factional control is going to impact on the humanitarian relief effort.

Political, Military and Humanitarian co-ordination

71. A combined military, political and humanitarian approach is required to tackle the crisis in Afghanistan. Given the volume of public utterances on the subject we would have expected a sharing of information and co-ordination of activity but we have seen little evidence that this is happening. Clare Short rightly pointed out that this kind of liaison needs to be got right at the beginning as its absence could impede later efforts at reconstruction. She told us “The civil/military liaison that we have had in this problem has not worked particularly well at all, nothing like as well as in Kosovo. We are working hard to try and improve it but it is an issue I would like the Select Committee to be aware of because we are going to need in the reconstruction some security. Some parts of the country are not orderly and some are. As soon as there is order you need to be able to say that the humanitarians can move. If military action is getting in the way of the humanitarian operation you need to be able to communicate and say, ‘Could you get out of the way please? We want to get some convoys through here’. You need that kind of communication. Some of it is there but it is not operating as well as it could and it would help us a lot if it improved”¹¹⁴. She went on to clarify that there was a mechanism for co-ordination but that the message of the humanitarian effort seemed to lose out to the military objectives. The bombing of the Red Cross buildings exemplifies the lack of co-ordination. With precious little security in the country it is vital that what chances there are for moving humanitarian assistance are seized and **we urge coalition forces to put more effort into co-ordinating and sharing information to assist the humanitarian effort**. Satellite images (which the US Administration has restricted by buying up all commercially available images of the region) and data on access routes, land mines and unexploded ordnance, and population displacement could all usefully be shared. A mechanism already exists for doing this through the Joint Logistics Centre, the Humanitarian Information Centre for Afghanistan and the military liaison personnel.

Joint Logistics Centre

72. The WFP launched a Special Operation to provide logistics support for the inter-agency relief effort in Afghanistan. It was included in the Inter-Agency Donor Alert which called for US\$27 million to support the Joint Logistics Centre. DFID was one of the first donors to contribute towards the special operation, providing US\$4.4 million. The Special Operation sought to establish, among other things:

- a logistic centre to co-ordinate all logistics activity, particularly for convoy operation;
- a common air service for passengers and cargo; and
- provision for radio and information and communications networks.

73. One of the activities covered by the joint logistics centre is the pooling of information and data to provide a common data set from which all humanitarian actors (and later those engaged in longer-term reconstruction) can rely. This function is carried out by

¹¹³Q5

¹¹⁴Q209

the Humanitarian Information Centre for Afghanistan (HICFA). HICFA provides maps and other data that are essential for operations, including mapping accessibility, locating mine fields and unexploded ordnance or plotting IDP movements. Our visit to HICFA in Islamabad convinced us that a great deal has been learnt since Kosovo. The operation in Islamabad is most impressive. We encourage DFID to press the UN agencies to have the HICFA operation fully evaluated so that donors and the UN agencies can learn exactly what has made it so much more successful than previous operations and so that a template for future operations can be developed.

74. HICFA also tracks and maps the various co-ordination mechanisms for humanitarian relief in Afghanistan. Figure 4 shows the complex co-ordination mechanisms that have grown up over the many years that aid agencies have been operating in Afghanistan. Having a well-established base to build on and a strong lead taken by the UN has resulted in efforts to bring humanitarian relief to Afghanistan being well co-ordinated. This example reinforces the importance of preparation and demonstrates the level of engagement that the international community should be considering in other areas around the world that are in crisis or at risk.

Importance of effective communication

75. In its memorandum, DFID acknowledged that communication difficulties and a lack of reliable information had for a long time complicated the provision of assistance in Afghanistan¹¹⁵. The Taliban ban on communications led to a reliance on informal communications networks such as information passed on by commercial lorry drivers or by aid workers leaving the country. Radio networks were in place but could not be used and e-mail is unreliable in Afghanistan. **Communication was notoriously difficult even before the Taliban banned its use and more attention could have been given to communications in the preparation for the crisis as far back as June 2001.**

76. **We welcome the funding given by DFID for co-ordination and the formation of the Joint Logistics Centre. We see this as an important means of gathering, collating, verifying and then sharing what sparse information is coming out of Afghanistan¹¹⁶.**

The role of international and national staff

77. We have already noted that one of the consequences of September 11 was the withdrawal of international humanitarian workers. The ability of local staff to keep humanitarian operations going in the absence of international staff should serve as an important reminder to the international community that cadres of expatriates rushing around the country in sports utility vehicles with strategies and plans are not always essential. As the DFID 100 day plan acknowledges, a sudden influx of international agencies can overwhelm and confuse the intended beneficiaries¹¹⁷. Clare Short told us "... all these international agencies, including British NGOs, employ local NGOs and local

¹¹⁵Ev 116, [Para 26]

¹¹⁶Ev 116, [Para 26]

¹¹⁷Ev 125, [Annex G, Para 1]

Afghans to do the operation when it gets right to the bottom. I think we should remember that and absolutely remember it in the reconstruction of the country. There is always a danger that when it becomes safe to go you get this flood of internationals coming in, all with their Land Rovers and expensive equipment and so on. It happened in East Timor to a considerable extent and caused some resentment. We must remember how, despite low levels of education and the rest, Afghans kept this going, and in the reconstruction effort their talents and skills must be used and we must not have lots of expensive internationals coming in above them except in a way that empowers them, and taking over and marginalising the people who are going to have to rebuild their country”¹¹⁸.

78. Nevertheless, international staff do have an important part to play. For example, national staff have no difficulty in carrying out general food distributions but in carrying out targeted distributions they can come under pressure from their own communities. Carol Bellamy of UNICEF said “It is not that the international staff are smarter or better or anything than the local staff it is just sometimes the kind of pressures that local staff can be under can really be lessened a little bit by having international staff out there”¹¹⁹. But we should never forget that national and local staff can do much more than they are sometimes given credit for. They may have alternative ideas of how problems can be resolved that will work better than externally-imposed solutions.

¹¹⁸Q206

¹¹⁹Q183

Access and a humanitarian space

79. Humanitarian workers need access and space to operate. Access to the IDPs and vulnerable populations inside Afghanistan has been extremely difficult. Even with the fall of the Taliban the situation has not dramatically improved; insecurity continues to make access a problem. There was some discussion early on in the crisis of the need for safe havens and safe areas. The idea of humanitarian corridors was discussed at one point. However, aid was still getting into the country without the benefit of designated safe areas. Much of this discussion evaporated with the collapse of the Taliban and attention focused instead on the need for peace-keepers or peace-enforcers (whose presence could provide the space and access needed by the humanitarian actors). Whatever emerges it is important that the independence of the humanitarian operation is preserved and that any military involvement in peace keeping or enforcement is underwritten by a UN mandate.

Preparedness and prediction

80. CARE International told us that if the international community had taken action on the humanitarian crisis earlier, the problems that Afghanistan now faces would be less acute¹²⁰. This is certainly true in the case of the humanitarian assistance although it is debatable that after years of neglect an earlier intervention could have made the problems faced in rebuilding Afghanistan any less acute. They went on to say that too little had been done too late to avert a crisis of massive proportions¹²¹. It is a condemnation of the international community that attention was only focused on the issue after September 11 and there is certainly more that the international community could have done to respond earlier to the needs identified by the WFP.

81. The UN agencies, in particular the WFP, have performed well in this crisis. But there is always room for improvement. Much was known about the humanitarian crisis facing Afghanistan long before September 11. The UN could have been better prepared for the events that unfolded given the scale of the crisis they knew they were facing. It is reasonable to ask why, if the international aid agencies were so well prepared, there was such a major gearing up of effort after September 11 with large numbers of international staff being brought in to strengthen teams. Part of that preparedness must come from being efficient, flexible and responsive – characteristics that are not always associated with UN bodies. Clare Short told us “...lots of UN agencies are not as efficient as they should be. They are very, very slow. They have incredibly cumbersome, inefficient economic management systems – as bad as, if not worse than, the EC, I have to say, which will fill you all with gloom, but it is true”¹²². **We encourage DFID to work closely with the UN agencies on their reform and restructuring. The UN has a vital role to play – bilateral donors cannot be everywhere but the UN can. But governments must help the UN fulfil this universal role; donors must stop asking the UN to do its job with one hand tied behind its back and should properly resource its activities.**

82. We believe that there is still more work to be done on the early identification of potential crises. We must ensure the international system can respond adequately with a

¹²⁰Ev 1

¹²¹Ev 3

¹²²Q200

planned and measured response rather than putting something together at the last minute. Some useful work is being done on disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation particularly with respect to natural disasters, such as the work underway in Bangladesh on disaster preparedness in relation to flooding¹²³. There is also a great deal of work being done on conflict prevention and we hope in the future to look more closely at how the Government's pooled resource for conflict prevention is being used. We are less sure that enough is being done to spot complex emergencies. **More could be done to track what is happening in failing states. UNICEF told us that it currently classifies 31 states as being in a state of emergency or crisis with an additional 35 on a watch list. While it has no definition of a failing state it assesses levels of conflict, violence, political tension, the occurrence of natural phenomena (such as floods or earthquakes), environmental hazards (such as pollution or water scarcity) and health conditions.** UNICEF said that DFID had supported UNICEF's work on these systems¹²⁴. There are several UN inter-agency systems for early warning and conflict prevention. A natural shock, like the series of droughts in Afghanistan, occurring in a failing state will be particularly severe, as the state is unable to respond in any way. Labelling certain countries as failing states may be politically sensitive, but we cannot pretend that all is well in many troubled areas. **We hope the Government's response to this report will address the issue of failing states, how they are monitored and what level of preparedness the international system can maintain to respond to problems in these failing states.** This seems a role well-suited to the UN but one that would need to be adequately financed.

The media response to the crisis

83. The response of the media to the crisis has been disappointing. A great deal of attention has been paid to the military side of the campaign with little devoted to the humanitarian crisis. Clare Short said "I think a lot of the public commentary on the conflict as well as the humanitarian situation has not been well-informed"¹²⁵. Before access to much of Afghanistan was possible, Justin Forsyth of Oxfam told us "... within Afghanistan there is a silent humanitarian crisis going on which will not be on our television screens. People will die slowly and in lonely ways in small villages and mountains and it will not grab the headlines of the news"¹²⁶. Once the Taliban began to collapse and access to the most vulnerable people was possible the world's media still chose to follow the military. What little coverage of the humanitarian crisis there has been has focused on refugees and refugee camps while the real crisis is inside Afghanistan among the internally displaced and vulnerable populations. A few reporters have chosen to focus on the humanitarian crisis but much more could be done to show the world the true nature of the crisis and the difficulties the humanitarian effort faces every day.

¹²³Q205

¹²⁴Ev 107-8, [Paras 16-23]

¹²⁵Q190

¹²⁶Q53

Politicisation of humanitarian assistance

84. Nearly all the witnesses who gave evidence to the inquiry referred to the neutrality of humanitarian assistance. Increasingly, modern complex emergencies are involving the simultaneous deployment of military and humanitarian personnel and the lines between the two are increasingly blurred – often because of the difficulties in delivering aid in areas of high insecurity and conflict. In relation to Afghanistan, the main concerns for western governments in recent years have been terrorism, drugs, refugees and women’s rights. Peace-making in Afghanistan was delegated to the UN but then not fully supported by the commitment and support of western governments. Their main responses have been either a strategic withdrawal from Afghanistan, or episodic military action and sanctions. In a recent article, Mohammed Haneef Atmar said “In these conditions, humanitarian aid works at best as a fig leaf for political action, at worst as an instrument of foreign policy to isolate the Taliban”¹²⁷. The legitimate foreign-policy objectives of donor nations should not impinge on humanitarian actions.

5. Looking forward to longer term reconstruction needs

85. The rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan is about more than rebuilding houses, roads and bridges. It is about rebuilding many if not all of the institutions of a modern state from almost nothing¹²⁸. The Committee intends to return to the issue of the longer-term reconstruction needs of Afghanistan at a later date, when a transitional government is firmly established and the process has begun. However, in conducting this inquiry into the humanitarian crisis we have becoming increasingly aware of the immense importance of reconstruction not only for the future of Afghanistan but for the stability of the region as a whole. In the paragraphs that follow we point to some of the key issues that will have to be considered in developing the plans for the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Two points stand out above all:

- the need for the reconstruction to be Afghan-led; and
- the need for stability, peace and safe homes where the people of Afghanistan can rebuild their livelihoods and their country.

86. In its paper on the reconstruction of Afghanistan the World Bank¹²⁹ identified a number of short term and longer term actions, including in the short term:

- Agricultural recovery and food security;
- Generating livelihoods for returning refugees and displaced people;
- Supporting existing communities through provision of basic services and small-scale development and empowerment programmes;
- Rapid rehabilitation of Afghanistan’s main road network;
- Expansion of the de-mining programme;
- Massive short-run employment generation through public works programmes;
- Re-starting and expanding key social services like education and health, with a focus on reaching girls and women; and

¹²⁷ Atmar, The Politicisation of humanitarian aid and its consequences for Afghans, Humanitarian Exchange, ODI, September 2001

¹²⁸ Q214

¹²⁹ Afghanistan – World Bank Approach Paper, November 2001

- Human capacity mobilization for social services, infrastructure, and public administration.

87. Actions in the longer term include:

- Establishment of sound economic management institutions (Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Treasury, Statistical System);
- Developing education and health systems that reach the bulk of the population (something which has never been achieved in Afghanistan);
- Developing a lean, effective, and honest civil service and institutions of public accountability;
- Urban management, and in particular avoiding permanent large ‘refugee cities’;
- Enabling environment for private sector development – particularly to attract and productively utilize Afghans from Pakistan, Iran, and the Middle East;
- Export development, focusing on agricultural and livestock products and minerals;
- Energy development and management; and
- Environment and natural resource management (especially forestry).

Involving the Afghan people

88. Despite all the problems that Afghanistan has faced, its people are resilient and willing to be involved in the rebuilding their country. If the process of reconstruction is to take root the Afghan people, and particularly the Afghan women, will have to be intimately involved with it. Sakandar Ali said “...[the longer-term reconstruction] has to be a programme conceived with the people, representing the needs of the people so that they have a sense of ownership and it ensures continuity and it ensures success”¹³⁰.

89. Sections of the Afghan diaspora are willing to return provided stability and security can be preserved. Many Afghan expatriates are highly educated and will bring back essential skills. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has begun a project to build a database of skills among the refugees and in the diaspora and is assessing people’s willingness to return so that the needs of the country can be matched against the skills of its people.

Security and stability

90. Security has been discussed earlier in this report in the context of maintaining the delivery of humanitarian relief. Steps will have to be taken to ensure security and stability, which are vital to any plans for longer term reconstruction. The provision of security and stability is likely to entail the disarmament and demobilisation of the warring factions and the creation of acceptable policing arrangements. **We would be interested to know what plans DFID and the Government have for using, in Afghanistan, the pooled resource on conflict prevention and the lessons learned in rebuilding Sierra Leone.**

¹³⁰Q87

The role of the UN and the international community in tackling poverty

91. In general, the international community has shown a lack of interest in Afghanistan and there has been insufficient work on development activities. Although the terrorists involved in September 11 appear to have come from prosperous Arab states, the beliefs and values which led to their actions have their roots in the bitterness and hatred born out of poverty and injustice. The war on terrorism is unlikely ultimately to be won without defeating terrorism's seed bed of poverty and injustice. In particular the United States must be bound into the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan and not turn its back on the region once Osama Bin Laden has been dealt with. Her Majesty's Government must ensure that the United States understands the importance of the contribution they have to make and work to keep them engaged in the region.

The shape of a future government

92. In Afghanistan, the key institutions of state, such as a central bank, tax collection system, customs and excise, national statistics, an impartial civil service, institutions of law and order, and a functioning judicial system are either missing or perilously weak¹³¹. CARE International said that a political process was needed in Afghanistan that ensured plurality, safeguarded the vulnerable and established the foundations of prosperity. They called for the international community to back a longer-term programme of rehabilitation and development¹³². This is not the first time that Afghanistan has faced a new dawn and the prospect of reconstruction – there were the Geneva Accords of 1988 and the 1993 peace process. Many of those whom we met on our visit could recall previous attempts at reconstruction and were a little cynical about the chances. However, there are reasons to believe that things can be different this time. Previously, there have been few attempts at reconciliation and little attempt to provide security (one of the reasons the Taliban were accepted initially was because of the order they brought). Now there is international attention on the need to preserve stability and to work towards reconciliation. It is vital that this time the international community – as a whole – makes a long-term commitment to solving the problems in Afghanistan and the surrounding region and holds to the policy.

93. Whatever form of transitional government emerges and whatever the shape of government in the future it is important that the external powers working for a settlement respect the history and traditions of the area and do not try to impose a settlement at odds with Afghanistan's culture. Central to this must be the role of the elder councils or Loya Jirga. However, while respecting traditions it will be essential to build in democracy and accountability at local, regional and national levels of government. Women are key to the rebuilding and future stability of Afghanistan not least because, unlike men, few were involved in fighting; they must play their full part at all levels of government. **In order to ensure that women's needs are properly reflected in the long-term reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, it will be necessary to ensure that women, as well as men, control budgets for development programmes.**

¹³¹ Afghanistan – World Bank Approach Paper, November 2001

¹³² Ev 4

94. The UN and the international NGOs will be the largest employers in any post-conflict reconstruction. If the food in food-for-work projects is counted as wages, then before September 11, the WFP was the largest employer in Afghanistan¹³³. DFID's 100-day plan acknowledges the danger that the wages offered by the UN and international NGOs could potentially undermine attempts to establish local institutions and government¹³⁴.

95. Women, like men, need education in order to play an effective role in public affairs. UNHCR told us that it is their policy to provide primary education for boys and girls in the refugee camps, but not secondary education. The international development target of ensuring that all children have access to primary education by 2015 may be having the unintended consequence of reducing the emphasis on secondary education. Very few girls, compared even with boys, in the refugee camps or in Afghanistan attend secondary classes. **DFID should address the lack of secondary education for Afghan girls in order to create a larger cadre of women who are equipped to play a leading role in the local, regional and national government and in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.**

The need for a regional aid strategy

96. Thought must be given to the impact the reconstruction of Afghanistan will have on its neighbours. Nigel Fisher of UNICEF recognised this when he said "I think one thing that is very new is the consistent international recognition that the whole crisis now is a result of [a] lack of peace and security in Afghanistan and that the long-term resolution of those problems is part of a long-term resolution of the international crisis. It is very important, I think, that the international community follows [its] rhetoric with investment, long-term investment and not only in Afghanistan, it is required in Tajikistan, it is required even in Balochistan and North West Frontier Province. The crisis is sub-regional, not only in Afghanistan"¹³⁵. There is currently an emergency feeding programme in Tajikistan as a result of the regional drought. Some of Afghanistan's neighbours are themselves recovering from civil war and instability. Donors will need to take a regional perspective if there is to be any hope of a longer term settlement that does not simply displace the problem into a neighbouring country or attract instability in the form of economic migrants.

From food-for-work to institution building – bridging the gap

97. It will be essential to bridge the transition from, in the short-term, the provision of humanitarian relief to, in the longer term, more development-based activity. Humanitarian relief will be needed for some time to come. There will be no definitive end to this and the transition to development activity will take place at a different pace in different areas. In the interim, there will be a role for programmes such as WFP food-for-work and food-for-education programmes. Eventually these programmes can be reduced once the economy begins to function and people are able to build their own livelihoods.

¹³³Q161

¹³⁴Ev 126, [Annex G, Para 6]

¹³⁵Q180

Repatriation

98. Prior to the September 11 attacks, the UNHCR had estimated that 200,000 Afghan refugees would be repatriated from Iran and Pakistan (100,000 from each country) in 2001. By January 2001, 1,455,000 refugees had been repatriated from Iran and 2,368,000 from Pakistan. But prospects for returnees are dismal. There is widespread poverty, limited food security, drought, failure of crops, loss of livestock, no significant rehabilitation or development projects, no private sector investment, unreliable and non-existent infrastructure and widespread problems with landmines and unexploded ordinance. The Taliban oversaw a reorganisation of the public sector that has exacerbated urban poverty (downsizing of several ministries, banning women from teaching and withdrawing their salaries)¹³⁶.

99. Spontaneous repatriation has been going on as long as the refugee crisis (see Table 8) and has continued throughout the crisis. This indicates that many refugees still have a strong desire to return home. Any plans for the longer-term reconstruction of Afghanistan must address the issue of repatriation. Refugees in Iran and Pakistan are well integrated into local communities and in some cases appear to have settled. They have access to education (albeit limited) and some health provision. Many refugees from rural backgrounds have become urbanised in the cramped conditions of the refugee camps¹³⁷, which no longer represent tented camps but sprawling towns indistinguishable from their Pakistani neighbours. If these refugees are ever to return home they will want conditions to be as good as or better than those in which they have been living. Security is the trigger that will cause them to return home but it is only the creation of viable livelihoods that will keep them in Afghanistan and prevent them from becoming displaced. This will require the development of agriculture, the repair of irrigation systems, demining, the provision of infrastructure, measures to tackle poverty and above all adequate food security. **Longer-term reconstruction will have to deliver both security and economic prosperity while safeguarding human rights and ensuring access to health and education.**

¹³⁶UN Consolidated Appeal 2001, <http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2001/afg/AfghanistanAppeal/index.shtml>

¹³⁷Q170

Year	Pakistan (assisted)	Pakistan (spontaneous)	Pakistan Subtotal	Iran (assisted)	Iran (spontaneous)	Iran Subtotal	Grand Total
1988/89		200,000	200,000				200,000
1990	63,000	87,000	150,000				150,000
1991	174,000	26,000	200,000				200,000
1992	1,274,000		1,274,000	7,000	287,000	294,000	1,568,000
1993	133,000	225,000	358,000	337,000	269,000	606,000	964,000
1994	32,000	71,000	103,000	121,000	106,000	227,000	330,000
1995	77,000	76,000	153,000	92,000	103,000	195,000	348,000
1996	101,000	20,000	121,000	8,000	6,000	14,000	135,000
1997	71,000	13,000	84,000	2,000		2,000	87,000
1998	93,000		93,000	14,000		14,000	107,000
1999	92,000		92,000	9,000	152,000	161,000	253,000
2000	77,000		77,000	184,000	31,000	216,000	293,000
Total	2,187,000	718,000	2,905,000	775,000	954,000	173,000	4,635,000

Table 8: Afghan Repatriation Statistics. Note: Some totals may not add up due to rounding

100. During our visit to Pakistan the UNHCR told us that if a transitional government were formed, up to three and a half million refugees from Iran, Pakistan and other countries could decide to return home. Of these between 800,000 and one million would be likely to return after the winter. This would present a significant challenge to the UNHCR and potentially could put an additional strain on Afghanistan as well as increasing tension within the country. **The issues of repatriation and returnees must be included in any discussion on the reconstruction of Afghanistan.**

101. UNHCR also told us that they were able to provide a repatriation grant worth US\$120 for each family returning home. The grant consisted of 5000 Rupees in cash (worth US\$90), 100 kg wheat and a piece of plastic sheeting. The cash is intended to enable the family to pay for transport but it is only enough to get a family from North West Frontier Province to Kabul. Families from further away in Afghanistan need a larger grant.

The outlook for food security

102. The immediate prospects for food security look bleak. Much of the agricultural land is damaged and displaced people have been unable to plant crops this year. Some of the agricultural land is unusable because of landmines, cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance.

Opium production

103. Nearly ninety per cent of the heroin in the UK has its origins in Afghanistan. Afghan farmers turned to poppy farming because of the premium the crop attracted while the agricultural sector in Afghanistan was reeling from the drought. DFID had begun to put money into tackling opium production in the wake of a Taliban ban on poppy cultivation. It is unclear what will happen, especially as many of the poppy fields are now in the hands of tribal factions, but a solution to the problem is needed. Farmers will have to be encouraged to make a livelihood not from opium but either by a return to subsistence or

alternative cash crop farming. Support for the development of sustainable livelihoods, which in the past has been weak, is essential.

Basic services

104. Any response by donors to plans for reconstruction must ensure that healthcare, nutrition, water supplies, sanitation and education are properly considered and adequately resourced. Afghanistan has poor facilities and lacks trained staff in its hospitals¹³⁸.

105. Access to health services in Afghanistan is almost non-existent for the most vulnerable people – often women and children. Afghanistan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and vaccine preventable diseases account for sixty per cent of all child deaths in Afghanistan. Twenty five per cent of children die before their fifth birthday and overall life expectancy is forty-four years. Half of Afghanistan's children already suffer malnutrition. The maternal mortality rate is the second highest in the world¹³⁹. UNICEF predicted that as many as 128,000 children will die in the next six months – almost three times as many as would die in 'normal' circumstances¹⁴⁰. Carol Bellamy told us that of the twenty countries in the world with the worst under five mortality rate nineteen were in sub-Saharan Africa and the other was Afghanistan¹⁴¹.

106. Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world and only thirty-nine per cent of boys and three per cent of girls have access to education¹⁴². Many of the poorest families are unwilling to send their children, especially the girls, to school as the children are needed to help maintain the families' livelihood. Dedicated teachers working in very difficult circumstances providing education to girls in secret informal schools have achieved a great deal. The international community must focus on education, developing flexible approaches and using informal teaching arrangements where necessary. There has been some success with food-for-education schemes and there is certainly a continuing role for them in the medium term. However, a more permanent solution to improving school attendance must be developed in the longer term.

Demobilisation, disarmament and child soldiers

107. Procedures must be developed for the safe surrender, disarming and detention of captured fighters in Afghanistan. Judicial procedures will need to be set up to try those in custody accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law. The coalition in Afghanistan will also need to provide logistical support to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners in their custody. While it can be helpful to the national psyche to have some form of tribunal where justice can be seen to be done and reconciliation for the past made, such mechanisms are fraught with difficulty and, as the Cambodian example shows, can take a long time to come to fruition.

¹³⁸Ev 42, [Para 6]

¹³⁹Ev 78, [Para 2]

¹⁴⁰Ev 78, [Para 5]

¹⁴¹Q132

¹⁴²Ev 42, [Para 7]

108. Future stability is likely be dependant on the extent to which demobilisation and disarmament of the rival factions, including the victorious groups, within Afghanistan is successful. There may be a need for an international process to oversee and verify disarmament to ensure that all parties engage in the process. Demobilisation of the informal militias will be difficult; many have fought for years and they have an uncertain economic future. They face the same problems that repatriated refugees face returning to their homes with widespread poverty, limited food security, little economic opportunity and widespread problems agricultural land degradation due to drought, conflict and landmines or unexploded ordinance.

109. There are a significant number of child combatants in Afghanistan. Children have been exposed to a culture of violence ever since the Soviet invasion. We were told during our recent visit that school text books would often depict violence in the examples used for the most basic numeracy teaching. As a consequence, violence is ingrained into the modern culture of Afghanistan and new teaching materials will be needed if violence is to be removed. Both Save the Children and UNICEF called for a halt in the recruitment of child soldiers and the demobilisation of existing child soldiers. This may require the creation of specialist centres¹⁴³.

Demining

110. DFID has recently decided to channel its funding for demining activity through the UN Mine Action Service rather than support demining activities directly. One of the criticisms of this approach is that the UN administrative overhead means less money will be spent on demining. On the other hand the UN has a global reach in ways that bilateral donors do not.

111. Afghanistan is the second most heavily mined country in the world. Around three hundred Afghans are killed or maimed by land mines each month¹⁴⁴. Children are often the victims of landmines or unexploded ordnance and cluster bombs can only have added to the total. One in three of Afghanistan's mine victims is a child¹⁴⁵. The UN Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan is one of the most successful but in 2000 funding was cut by half as donors only provided fifty per cent of the amount requested in the 2000 Consolidated Appeal. The shortfall in funding meant that only sixty-four per cent of its clearance target and sixty-eight per cent of its mine awareness targets were met¹⁴⁶. The shortfall in funding was so severe that from September to December 2000 implementing staff in NGOs were sent on two months unpaid leave with a freeze on salaries for all other staff. **There is an urgent need to increase the resources available for the removal and disposal of mines and unexploded ordnance.** UNOCHA co-ordinates mine action in Afghanistan. In the donor alert it requested US\$17.1 million for mine action but by November 14 had only received US\$3.2 million¹⁴⁷. UNICEF called for extra resources to

¹⁴³Ev 81,[Paras 37-38], Ev 43, [Para 10]

¹⁴⁴Atmar, The Politicisation of humanitarian aid and its consequences for Afghans, Humanitarian Exchange, ODI, September 2001

¹⁴⁵Ev 42,[Para 8]

¹⁴⁶UN Consolidated Appeal 2001

¹⁴⁷UNOCHA, Financial tracking data from ReliefWeb, Table III Listing of Project Activities - By Sector

be channelled into mine awareness education and for the support of mine victims¹⁴⁸. In their memoranda, both Save the Children and UNICEF called for a halt in the use of cluster bombs¹⁴⁹.

The role of women

112. Women will be a powerful force for change in Afghanistan. It was female WFP staff members who convinced the Taliban to allow bakeries to be established in Kabul run by women for women because the Taliban's ban on women working would have had a devastating impact on widows and female-headed households¹⁵⁰.

113. There are an estimated 700,000 war widows in Afghanistan. In a country where women have few rights, female-headed households and child-headed households often have to eke out extremely fragile livelihoods¹⁵¹. Whatever form of government emerges, we must ensure that those in power will have respect for women's rights and will lead by example. No side in the current conflict has demonstrated sufficient understanding of this issue and it will require significant political pressure from the international community to end decades of oppression. But change it must, women have a vital role to play in the rebuilding and reconstruction of a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. We expect that donors including DFID will be working to raise awareness of the important part that women have to play in the rebuilding of Afghanistan and to ensure that they are properly represented in any transitional government.

Risk of Talibanisation of Pakistan

114. There is already evidence of an increasing 'Talibanisation' of Pakistan and a rise of an increasingly singular approach to Islam being taught in the madrassas. Clare Short said "Of course the nightmare of anything going wrong in Afghanistan would be Pakistan being destabilised and being Talibanised and then you would have a Taliban government with a nuclear weapon"¹⁵². The madrassas were able to attract the poor by providing food, shelter, an education and ultimately a cause. The relationship between the state and religion is crucial. The Government of Pakistan needs to be able to check what is being taught to its young people and monitor the quality of the curriculum. The growth of the madrassas was symptomatic of a failure to tackle poverty and provide basic education in Pakistan. Abbas Sarfraz Khan, Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Northern Areas, SAFRON and Housing Works with responsibility for Afghan refugees, conceded that, in the 1980s refugee camps had been the recruiting ground for mujahedin fighters and that previous governments had colluded in this. He noted that since that time, the situation had changed radically and the Government of Pakistan would now not allow camps to be used as a base for fermenting extremism. **DFID should comment on its plans for supporting education in Pakistan in its response to this report.**

¹⁴⁸Ev 82, [Para 42]

¹⁴⁹Ev 41; Ev 82, Para 41]

¹⁵⁰Q151

¹⁵¹Ev 44, [Para 20]

¹⁵²Q213

6. Conclusion

115. This report has attempted to provide an analysis of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan – a crisis which was underway well before the events of September 11. We have looked at the impact which September 11 had both on the humanitarian crisis itself and on ability of the agencies to cope with it. We have indicated some of the areas on which reconstruction plans should focus and to which we will return in another inquiry at a later date. **The five key conclusions are that:**

- **the primary distribution of food has, despite all obstacles, been delivered in adequate quantities but *the failure of the secondary distribution systems* has prevented its delivery to all those in need;**
- **secondary distribution been inadequate because of *the lack of security over large parts of Afghanistan*. The collapse of the Taliban did not bring the safe humanitarian space which had been hoped for, it often substituted one security concern for another. Banditry and lawlessness replaced military conflict;**
- ***local Afghan people*, particularly women, kept humanitarian and other development assistance going during the crisis and demonstrated they *should be central to the future development of Afghanistan*;**
- ***the unwillingness of donors to match their pledges with hard cash* has resulted in gaps in provision;**
- **the ability to prepare adequately has been limited by *the general under-funding of the UN agencies*.**

Ultimately, the success of the continuing humanitarian relief operation depends on adequate levels of funding and crucially, either stability returning to Afghanistan, or the provision of security for humanitarian relief operations by the international community. We will return to the subject of Afghanistan's reconstruction and monitor the shift from food aid assistance to strategies for long-term sustainable development that must ultimately ensure Afghanistan ceases to be the poorest country in the world.

LIST OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) **We believe that, in the absence of a complete picture, there was a tendency for international agencies and NGOs to generalise from the specific, which may account for some of the differences of opinion as to the scale of the problem that arose early in the crisis (paragraph 14).**
- (b) **The UK is one of a small number of donors with a good record of turning promises quickly into cash. We encourage DFID to work with those donor countries which also responded rapidly to encourage other donors to ensure that their pledges are converted into real commitments and actual money (paragraph 18).**
- (c) **There is a desperate need to ensure that the Donor Alert is properly funded and that pledges are converted into resources: pledges alone cannot be spent (paragraph 20).**
- (d) **The UN is faced with an ever-increasing number of commitments around the world and is repeatedly having to seek funds from donors. It is inevitable that an element of donor fatigue will creep in as will the temptation for UN agencies to inflate their requests knowing they are likely only to receive a fraction of what they ask for. We believe it is time for the UN to review the way humanitarian operations are funded. We suggest assessed contributions providing the core funding topped up by voluntary appeals through donor alerts (paragraph 22).**
- (e) **We recommend that the Government announces a timetable against which the UK intends to reach the 0.7 per cent target (paragraph 23).**
- (f) **We recommend a similar streamlining of donor procedures in multilateral donations to reduce the burden on UN agencies particularly with regard to the large numbers of requests for additional information (paragraph 25).**
- (g) **If the EC is to play an important part in the longer-term post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan it should re-evaluate its Asia aid programmes. At the very least, the Commission should ensure that the money it has pledged to the Afghan crisis is turned into firm commitments forthwith (paragraph 26).**
- (h) **The cutbacks in refugee programmes by UN agencies provoked a reaction from the Government of Pakistan which closed its borders and began deporting refugees. Thus, a lack of interest by the donor community at a crucial juncture destroyed almost twenty years of goodwill, and created the lasting legacy of today's closed border policy (paragraph 33).**

- (i) **We can understand Iran and Pakistan’s reluctance to accept large numbers of refugees; donors must ensure that the long-term refugee problem that faces both countries is resolved as part of the reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan (paragraph 37).**
- (j) **Once the WFP had adapted its procedures the insecurity in the country and not the bombing by coalition forces seemed to be the major barrier to primary and secondary food distribution (paragraph 54).**
- (k) **We remain to be convinced that the food delivered into Afghanistan can be distributed to all those in need, primarily because of poor security (paragraph 58).**
- (l) **If the security problems cannot be resolved and food distributed, there may be a need to resort to less successful methods such as airdrops or risk further displacements of population, which in the winter could be catastrophic (paragraph 58).**
- (m) **We believe that food should not be counted as distributed until NGOs and local partners contracted to carry out the distribution have confirmed that the food has been distributed (paragraph 58).**
- (n) **Secondary distribution has been the weakness in the current crisis. The security situation and absence of international staff have hampered secondary distribution more than primary distribution. However, we have not seen any evidence to suggest that secondary distribution is being ignored; the WFP has demonstrated a flexible approach by allowing urban logistic hubs to be bypassed and securing additional trucking capacity (paragraph 59).**
- (o) **We believe that donors should be working to allow the WFP to make greater use of local purchases by giving cash rather than in-kind contributions (paragraph 62).**
- (p) **DFID should continue making cash contributions wherever possible. Such a policy will maximise the value for money of the UK’s contribution by providing the greatest utility to the aid agencies (paragraph 62).**
- (q) **We believe that the money spent on dropping humanitarian daily rations would have been better spent through the co-ordinated donor response (paragraph 64).**
- (r) **Everyone we spoke to, whether in London or Pakistan, stressed to us that the most serious barrier to humanitarian assistance has been and remains poor security (paragraph 65).**

-
- (s) **Security needs to extend to the secondary distribution network as well as to the supply route into Afghanistan. Delivering food into the country is not enough – it must be distributed as well (paragraph 65).**
 - (t) **We invite the Government to set out the measures in place for the protection of humanitarian aid workers in international law and to outline its policies for ensuring greater protection of aid workers and non-combatants in complex emergencies (paragraph 69).**
 - (u) **We urge coalition forces to put more effort into co-ordinating and sharing information to assist the humanitarian effort (paragraph 71).**
 - (v) **Communication was notoriously difficult even before the Taliban banned its use and more attention could have been given to communications in the preparation for the crisis as far back as June 2001 (paragraph 75).**
 - (w) **We welcome the funding given by DFID for co-ordination and the formation of the Joint Logistics Centre. We see this as an important means of gathering, collating, verifying and then sharing what sparse information is coming out of Afghanistan (paragraph 76).**
 - (x) **We encourage DFID to work closely with the UN agencies on their reform and restructuring. The UN has a vital role to play – bilateral donors cannot be everywhere but the UN can. But governments must help the UN fulfil this universal role; donors must stop asking the UN to do its job with one hand tied behind its back and should properly resource its activities (paragraph 81).**
 - (y) **More could be done to track what is happening in failing states. UNICEF told us that it currently classifies 31 states as being in a state of emergency or crisis with an additional 35 on a watch list. While it has no definition of a failing state it assesses levels of conflict, violence, political tension, the occurrence of natural phenomena (such as floods or earthquakes), environmental hazards (such as pollution or water scarcity) and health conditions (paragraph 82).**
 - (z) **We hope the Government's response to this report will address the issue of failing states, how they are monitored and what level of preparedness the international system can maintain to respond to problems in these failing states (paragraph 82).**
 - (aa) **We would be interested to know what plans DFID and the Government have for using, in Afghanistan, the pooled resource on conflict prevention and the lessons learned in rebuilding Sierra Leone (paragraph 90).**
 - (bb) **In order to ensure that women's needs are properly reflected in the long-term reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, it will be**

necessary to ensure that women, as well as men, control budgets for development programmes (paragraph 93).

- (cc) DFID should address the lack of secondary education for Afghan girls in order to create a larger cadre of women who are equipped to play a leading role in the local, regional and national government and in the reconstruction of Afghanistan (paragraph 95).
- (dd) Longer-term reconstruction will have to deliver both security and economic prosperity while safeguarding human rights and ensuring access to health and education (paragraph 99).
- (ee) The issues of repatriation and returnees must be included in any discussion on the reconstruction of Afghanistan (paragraph 100).
- (ff) There is an urgent need to increase the resources available for the removal and disposal of mines and unexploded ordnance (paragraph 111).
- (gg) DFID should comment on its plans for supporting education in Pakistan in its response to this report (paragraph 114).
- (hh) The five key conclusions are that:
 - the primary distribution of food has, despite all obstacles, been delivered in adequate quantities but *the failure of the secondary distribution systems* has prevented its delivery to all those in need;
 - secondary distribution been inadequate because of *the lack of security over large parts of Afghanistan*. The collapse of the Taliban did not bring the safe humanitarian space which had been hoped for, it often substituted one security concern for another. Banditry and lawlessness replaced military conflict;
 - *local Afghan people*, particularly women, kept humanitarian and other development assistance going during the crisis and demonstrated they *should be central to the future development of Afghanistan*;
 - *the unwillingness of donors to match their pledges with hard cash* has resulted in gaps in provision;
 - the ability to prepare adequately has been limited by *the general under-funding of the UN agencies*.

Ultimately, the success of the continuing humanitarian relief operation depends on adequate levels of funding and crucially, either stability returning to Afghanistan, or the provision of security for humanitarian relief operations by the international community. We will return to the subject of Afghanistan's reconstruction and

monitor the shift from food aid assistance to strategies for long-term sustainable development that must ultimately ensure Afghanistan ceases to be the poorest country in the world (paragraph 115).

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO THE REPORT

MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2001

Members present:

Tony Baldry, in the Chair

John Battle	Chris McCafferty
Hugh Bayley	Mr Piara S. Khabra
Ann Clwyd	Mr Robert Walter
Tony Colman	

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report [The Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and the Surrounding Region], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read the first time.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs entitled 'Background', 'Acknowledgements', and 'Summary' read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 1 to 115 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select committees (reports)) be applied to the Report.

Several papers were ordered to be appended to the Minutes of Evidence.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 18 December at a quarter past Ten o'clock

LIST OF WITNESSES

(The following page references refer to Volume II)

Page

TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2001

Mr Justin Forsyth, Policy Director, and Ms Jane Cocking, Humanitarian Coordinator, Former Soviet Union, Middle East and Eastern Europe, Oxfam, and Mr Raja Jarrah, Programme Director, CARE International UK, (representing the Disasters Emergency Committee) Ev 5

TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2001

Dr Daleep Mukarji, Director, and Ms Alison Kelly, Head, Middle East, Europe and Central Asia Team, Christian Aid, Mr Sakandar Ali, Country Representative for Afghanistan, and Mr Affan Cheema, Regional Programme Manager, UK, Islamic Relief, and Mr David Walker, Regional Director, South and Central Asia, Save the Children, (representing the British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)) Ev 22

THURSDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2001

Mr Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director, OCHA-Geneva, and Mr Imran Akhtar, Desk Officer, OCHA, Ms Catherine Bertini, Executive Director, and Ms Daniela Owen, Liaison Officer for Middle East, Central Asia and Mediterranean, WFP, Mr Kamel Morjane, Assistant High Commissioner, and Mr Ekber Menemencioglu, Director for Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, UNHCR, and Ms Carol Bellamy, Executive Director and Mr Nigel Fisher, Representative for Afghan Children, UNICEF Ev 88

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2001

Rt Hon Clare Short, a Member of the House, Secretary of State for International Development, Mr Barrie Ireton, Director General, International and Western Asia, and Mr Matt Baugh, Humanitarian Programmes Manager, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), Department for International Development Ev 129

LIST OF MEMORANDA INCLUDED IN THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

	<i>Page</i>
1. Memorandum submitted by CARE International UK	Ev 1
2. Memorandum submitted by Oxfam	Ev 19
3. Joint memorandum submitted by Christian Aid and Islamic Relief	Ev 21
4. Memorandum submitted by Save the Children UK	Ev 40
5. Joint supplementary memorandum submitted by Christian Aid and Islamic Relief	Ev 49
6. Memorandum submitted by the British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)	Ev 57
7. Memorandum submitted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)	Ev 77
8. Memorandum submitted by Catherine A. Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme	Ev 85
9. Memorandum submitted by the World Food Programme	Ev 103
10. Supplementary memorandum submitted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)	Ev 104
11. Memorandum submitted by the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Ev 108
12. Memorandum submitted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Ev 111
13. Memorandum submitted by The Rt Hon Clare Short MP, Secretary of State for International Development	Ev 113

LIST OF APPENDICES TO THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

1. Memorandum submitted by Saferworld	Ev 147
2. Memorandum submitted by Jaya Graves	Ev 149

3. Memorandum submitted by British Red Cross Ev 150

LIST OF MEMORANDA RECEIVED AND PLACED IN THE LIBRARY

The following memoranda have been reported to the House, but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Record Office, House of Lords, and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to the Record Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW (tel: 020 7219 3074). The Record Office is open to the public from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

1. Supplementary memorandum submitted by Oxfam
2. Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Department for International Development