

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTARY FOREIGN AID

PUBLIC MEETING

- FEBRUARY 20, 2002 -

SUMMARY REPORT

“AFGHANISTAN RELIEF, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AGENDA”

William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair, welcomed the ACVFA members, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff, and meeting participants. He remarked that USAID’s Conflict Prevention and Disaster Relief pillar was established prior to September 11, but since then the pillar has been front and center. The centrality of a well-managed USAID and the importance of the new pillar, as well as what an agile and experienced set of PVOs can do in a region like Central Asia, has been brought to the forefront.

Mr. Reese welcomed the newest member of the ACVFA, Stephen Moseley, President of the Academy for Educational Development (AED). Mr. Reese then congratulated Mr. Natsios on the excellent team that he has built at USAID.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA: LONG- TERM PROSPECTS”

ANDREW NATSIOS, USAID ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Natsios remarked that the subject of peace and development in Afghanistan is of central importance to PVOs, the U.S. government, and the U.S. public, as well as the people of Central Asia. Mr. Natsios described the U.S. government’s four objectives in the first phase of the reconstruction effort:

1. **Repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons**

Refugee camps are a breeding ground worldwide for terrorism and extremism. Health problems and other social ills abound in the camps. For these reasons, there is a deliberate effort to move people voluntarily back to their homes as soon as possible.

2. **Restoration of food security**

Eighty percent of the people in Afghanistan live in rural areas, and two-thirds are farmers or herders. The principal agricultural challenge is water; there has been a drought for

four years. Water is needed to rescue the vineyards and orchards, which used to produce crops for export, as well as to keep animals alive. Lack of water also presents problems with housing, sanitation, and health. USAID's focus on agricultural reconstruction will include the water system and food security, as well as efforts to avert poppy production. Food security includes food production, livelihoods, and health. Livelihood means increasing family incomes, which will involve public works projects, including rural roads. The health and nutrition indicators for Afghanistan - infant and child mortality, maternal mortality, per-capita caloric intake - are among the worst in the world. Thus, there will be a health component to the reconstruction projects - an ill population cannot fully benefit from improvements in food production and income.

3. Creation of political and economic conditions for stability

This includes rehabilitation of markets and roads, as well as the creation of jobs. The U.S. intervention also includes schools. Public education will get teachers back into the classrooms and kids off the streets. In cooperation with the University of Nebraska, USAID is printing 9.7 million books for Afghanistan. Since two-thirds of Afghan teachers are women, it is crucial to get the schools up and running as soon as possible in order to empower women. USAID will also make some grants to develop Afghan NGOs with the goal of supporting the development of civil society.

4. Rehabilitation of the governance system of Afghanistan

One of the objectives of the U.S. government effort is to support the interim government of Afghanistan. Development assistance has to be visible as U.S. government

assistance and must be seen as directly supporting the interim government. Few people know that the United States gave a billion dollars in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan over the last ten years.

DISCUSSION

Issues discussed include the following:

- How will USAID assist in the coordination of NGOs in Afghanistan? Coordination is primarily a United Nations function and the United States will support that effort.
- What is USAID's plan for the disabled with regard to health and education? This year USAID will use \$1 million from the Leahy War Victims Fund to assist the disabled.
- What is the impact of Afghanistan efforts on other USAID programs? USAID put together the \$296 million pledge for Afghanistan by using funds from existing accounts and new money, as well as money received through the

Department of Defense supplemental appropriation. It would not be accurate to say that this effort is taking resources away from other programs because USAID was already spending a lot of money in the region prior to September 11.

“USAID’S RESPONSE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS” BERND McCONNELL, DIRECTOR, CENTRAL ASIA TASK FORCE, USAID

Mr. McConnell showed the meeting participants a map of Afghanistan produced last summer by the World Food Programme (WFP). U.S. food assistance — 253,000 metric tons of food — was focused on the red sections of

One of the objectives of the U.S. government effort is to support the interim government of Afghanistan.

the map where the need for food has been the greatest. More than half of the food provided to Afghanistan is U.S. food — \$146 million worth. A second, more recent, slide showed far fewer red areas. Mr. McConnell stated that WFP and implementing partners have done a magnificent job in dealing with the food emergency, especially moving food under very difficult circumstances.

USAID is moving along the continuum from emergency relief to reconstruction in Afghanistan, but there is still a long way to go. As of October 4, money in hand equaled \$320 million. There is not room in this current budget for significant reconstruction.

Mr. McConnell commented that USAID just completed its first in-depth official survey covering the southern half of the country. The USAID presence in Afghanistan comprises an Acting Mission Director in Kabul and several short-term staff, who until recently were restricted to Kabul. New information is now coming in and USAID is adjusting its programs in response to this information.

USAID is moving along the continuum from emergency relief to reconstruction.

DISCUSSION

Issues discussed include the following:

- Will USAID stand behind program implementers when challenged by warlords? Yes, USAID will support program implementers and the interim government.
- What type of programmatic support will USAID provide to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs? At present USAID is assisting in the renovation of the building that houses the Ministry. USAID is aware that the disbursement from the UN is not coming fast enough and is moving forward with some direct support to the government

ministries including the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. USAID’s view is that this ministry is very important and that gender should be integrated into all reconstruction projects.

- Does USAID have a long-term plan for Afghanistan? At present, USAID does not have the data to develop a realistic long-term plan. It is hoped that, as the situation evolves, the private sector will be involved in formulating such a plan.
- To what extent will USAID coordinate educational efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan? The program in Pakistan, approximately \$40 million, will be almost exclusively in the education realm.
- To what extent is USAID working with private companies to mobilize the reconstruction of Afghanistan? Historically, USAID allied with transportation companies to move food. The Afghan-American Society in the United States is one organization that is trying to establish relationships with local firms.

PANEL

“LINKING RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FOR AFGHANISTAN AND FUTURE CRISES”

SUSAN WOODWARD, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, THE GRADUATE CENTER, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

In the first half of the 1990s the international community gained operational experience in various peace building

missions. By the end of the decade two main criticisms were identified:

1. The gap between relief and development, and
2. The conflict between the developmental approach of the international financial institutions and the goals of peace building missions.

There is now a body of genuine knowledge about what works and why, but the relationship between knowledge and practice is difficult. The most important lessons include the need to set priorities and the need to set a common political strategy among all donors and actors.

Three priorities for reconstruction in Afghanistan:

1. **Governance.** Politics must come first. The most important lesson is not to let the process of relief and development get ahead of the political process. If development rushes ahead of the political structure, one ends up supporting wartime structures and corruption. It is only when the local government authorities lead the setting of priorities and have the necessary administrative capacity that program implementation can be successful.
2. **Security.** The new government must provide security – for roads, for women and for families.
3. **Regional Framework.** The peace building process must be built into a regional framework. There is no way to revive the agricultural system or the transportation system without a regional framework.

Flexibility is also important, especially in response to assessments on the ground.

GENE DEWEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU FOR POPULATION, REFUGEES, and MIGRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

There are five topics that seem to arise at most humanitarian meetings:

1. The root causes of conflict or the breakdown of peace.
2. Early warning and prevention systems.
3. Effective police and judicial systems.
4. Internally displaced persons (IDPs).
5. The relief to development continuum.

Mr. Dewey never uses the term “lesson learned” – only “lesson identified.” He noted five principles that need to be kept in mind:

1. **Someone needs to be in charge.** The Interim Authority needs a small, but robust shadow UN structure to provide a framework for the implementing agencies in Afghanistan.
2. **Comprehensive campaign plan.** It is absolutely necessary to have such a plan for Afghanistan and someone will have to step forward to help write it. There is also a need for assignment of accountability by sectors to the mandated players.
3. **Information management.** This will require decisions at the top to determine what information is needed when, and in what format.
4. **Comprehensive, community based assessments.** Getting reliable information inside Afghanistan is still very difficult. It is critical to be able to predict whether or not there will be a large return of refugees in the spring.

An important lesson is not to let the process of relief and development get ahead of the political process.

5. Protection and security. Normally, the development of a police force and judicial system takes years, but this must be done quickly. Security is a critical component in the link between relief and development.

SIMA WALI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REFUGEE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan ranks among the most destitute, war-ravaged countries in the world. The answer to bringing peace and stability lies with the Afghan people themselves. There is a need to forge a strategic partnership with democratic-minded Afghan citizens and the Interim Authority to restore the physical, social, and cultural infrastructure of the country.

Recommendations about reconstruction in Afghanistan:

- Interventions must be based on the reality of Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic, Islamic society.
- The Interim Authority is desperately in need of cash; it is critical that these funds be released immediately.
- The development plan must be long-term in focus, three years at a minimum.
- The needs of refugees, the majority of whom are women, children, and handicapped, must be considered.
- Security is critical.
- An integrated approach is needed; all sectors are interrelated and all issues are women's issues.
- Reconstruction efforts must work through the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- Members of civil society, particularly women, must be involved in the loya jirga (national assembly).
- There is a need to develop statistics and key indicators related to policies and strategies.
- Afghans must lead the reconstruction efforts.
- Community based, indigenous Afghan organizations

There is a need to forge a strategic partnership with democratic-minded Afghan citizens and the Interim Authority.

have a strong record of providing critically needed services in their communities. It is crucial that this cadre of democratically minded Afghans be included in development schemes. Rebuilding and supporting civil institutions is the best insurance against terrorism.

NANCY LINDBORG, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MERCY CORPS INTERNATIONAL

Since the mid-1980s humanitarian and development workers have been seriously grappling with the issue of moving from relief to development. Some approaches are beginning to emerge that are being applied in Afghanistan:

- Increasing the capacity of agencies to understand and program effectively in the face of conflict.
- Recognizing that nothing can move forward without security.
- Supporting local capacity and civil society, but not rushing in and solidifying what are essentially wartime structures.
- Using direct distribution programs judiciously, assisting only the most vulnerable people in the most acute phases of emergencies.
- Making longer term, flexible funding available now.
- Recognizing the singularity of each situation, rather than relying on models and formulas.
- Utilizing regional solutions from the early stages of the recovery program.

DISCUSSION

Issues discussed include the following:

- Will women-led NGOs be able to get funding and participate fully in the rebuilding of their country? Yes, the United States is giving special emphasis to

implementers who can assist in the returnee program, which will require a major gender focus.

- Afghans must lead the reconstruction effort. Are there plans for employment training programs for refugees? Many refugees have had more access to training and education than their family members in Afghanistan.
- What are the prospects for NGOs to have a direct relationship with the government, particularly early on in the reconstruction process? Mr. Karzai and the UN recognize the need to create guidelines for NGO activity. That structure has not yet been defined.
- In the process of forming the institutional structure of the government, what inputs are needed from the private sector? The UN, in cooperation with many Afghan experts, is focusing on this issue. The U.S. role is to support this effort. The private sector could focus on economic issues.

The U.S. public sees the connection between their lives and the lives of people in Afghanistan.

demands for homeland security and military rebuilding. There is a very extensive list of international priorities and an official U.S. development assistance budget that is essentially a billion dollars less than it was a dozen years ago.

MARY McCLYMONT, PRESIDENT, INTERACTION

InterAction recently launched a five-year public education and advocacy campaign, called the “Global Partnership for Effective Assistance.” The campaign has three goals:

1. Increase development and humanitarian assistance.
2. Improve aid effectiveness and impact.
3. Build international partnerships (in the process of accomplishing the first two goals).

InterAction targeted seven accounts in the foreign operations budget for doubling over the next five years. It is critically important to inform the U.S. public about foreign assistance programs, especially the fact that

they work. InterAction’s recent public opinion surveys revealed that:

- The U.S. public sees the connection between their lives and the lives of people in Afghanistan.
- The public believes in building self-sufficiency.
- They believe in the Golden Rule.
- Americans are generous, despite the very difficult economic picture at home.
- Americans believe in partnership and teamwork.
- They worry about corruption and waste.
- The public wants effectiveness; they want to hear success stories.
- Americans are now more open to hearing messages about foreign assistance.

PANEL

“THE BUDGETARY CONTEXT: HOW WILL GLOBAL NEEDS BE MET?”

MODERATOR: CHARLES MACCORMACK, CHAIR, ACVFA RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Mr. MacCormack stated that since September 11, humanitarian and development assistance efforts have enjoyed a high level of public attention. There is a renewed debate about the factors most crucial for success. The question of how to finance effective humanitarian and development assistance could not be more acute. The U.S. economy is emerging from a recession with tremendous

In the budget that went to Congress this year there is only a modest increase in the seven development accounts, which after adjustment for inflation, amount to a billion dollars less than a decade ago. There is not enough money in the new budget for effective, long-term reconstruction in Afghanistan.

RODNEY BENT, DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)

Mr. Bent stated that there is no question that September 11 changed the focus of the Administration. There is also no question about the tremendous needs worldwide. Budgeting is about the allocation of scarce resources. Measurement, effectiveness, and impact are important considerations that require attention in the budget process.

The FY2003 budget provides \$750 million more than the FY1993 budget, reflecting substantial growth for international affairs. Development assistance has grown 14% over the last three years. People are aware of the links between terrorism and the U.S. role in the world. The development assistance budget that the President proposed recently is roughly \$250 million more than last year.

Mr. Bent noted that the real challenge of the budget process is to demonstrate the impact of the funds. He invited the audience to bring their knowledge of effective development programs to the budget debate, particularly in the public realm.

CHARLIE FLICKNER, MAJORITY CLERK, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING AND RELATED PROGRAMS, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Flickner reinforced the earlier remarks of Mr. Natsios regarding the need for more funding for Afghanistan and the surrounding region, coupled with the absolute need to make sure that those resources are used effectively. Congress recognizes that meeting the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan is critical. All U.S. assistance will have to be identified with the United States since its purpose is to implement foreign policy.

Mr. Flickner noted that the audience includes many people and organizations that have made a huge difference in the lives of many people around the world. But if groups are advocating silver bullets and simple solutions, they won't be supported.

Mr. Flickner agreed with the other panelists that the needs are great and the money is insufficient, but he emphasized the need for a test of potential effectiveness. USAID must improve its management and must demonstrate that its programs do bring about development. Mr. Flickner suggested that investments in education are effective and that the Foreign Operations Subcommittee would support the use of resources for education programs in Afghanistan.

PETER SMITH, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Smith's focus over the next year will be reaching out to the food assistance, refugee, and development assistance communities to understand their issues and hear their views. The majority of the Committee members are supportive of the President's budget request, but there are some areas of concern, including the level of funding for HIV/AIDS.

The Committee staff is also interested in the farm bill, particularly the trade title. Many aspects of the farm bill

The real challenge of the budget process is to demonstrate the impact of the funds.

were contemplated prior to September 11 in a budget environment that was much different than today. The Committee staff is generally supportive of the Global Food for Education initiative, but there may be a need to reassess the manner in which it is funded.

The Committee members and staff are supportive of the President's commitment to 70,000 refugee admissions this year. The Committee staff is extremely interested in the funding request for Afghanistan and looks forward to the Administration coming forward with a realistic and appropriate budget request.

DISCUSSION

Issues raised by participants include:

- What are some examples of what Congress would consider effective programs? Effectiveness comes from strong government institutions, security, and ownership by the people involved. The challenge is to put together criteria for effectiveness that rely on more than just a few measures without tying the bureaucracy into knots.
- What is the status of food assistance and the Global Fund for Education? In light of declining agricultural surpluses and a declining budget surplus there is a need to look carefully at the food aid program, including projected results and program efficiency.
- What are the plans for energy assistance for Afghanistan? Nothing can happen in terms of reconstruction or inter-regional links without restoring transmission lines and preventing total deforestation. Unfortunately, USAID does not have much capability in energy assistance now.

The challenge is to put together criteria for effectiveness that rely on more than just a few measures without tying the bureaucracy into knots.

- What is the likelihood of a dialogue between Congress and the Administration on the effectiveness of providing aid to countries that are not likely to use it well? It doesn't make sense to pour resources into countries whose governments are not accountable or committed to development. Congress is trying to give the Administration some flexibility on this. A test of the effectiveness of aid will be in Pakistan, where the government now is quite serious about human and social development.
- Why doesn't the United States take the lead on developing energy and technology in Afghanistan? There is a need to look very carefully at the limited resources available for Afghanistan and ensure that the U.S. government isn't replicating efforts by others or supplanting activities that could be done by the Afghans themselves. One must consider the comparative advantage of the United States, and the appropriate role for the U.S. government, private sector, and international donors.
- Could the U.S. government provide money for infrastructure, and then bring in the private sector to provide technical capability and financial investment? The U.S. bilateral program has largely abandoned infrastructure to the multilateral development banks. The 1960s system with division of labor between bilateral and multilateral organizations is gone and a new approach has not arisen to replace it.
- While the donor nations committed billions of dollars to Afghanistan, little has materialized in real terms to the interim government. When is the U.S. government going to empower the interim government with money? A comprehensive plan is critical. Mr. Karzai must give the impression that he is really running the government.

- Because of the events of September 11, the future of Afghanistan and the United States are tied together. Security for Afghanistan will bring security in the region, and in turn the world.
- What action should be taken by organizations concerned about effectiveness and accountability issues? InterAction is working with USAID on these issues, making recommendations, and sharing best practices. There is a need to share examples of effective programs with the public and Congress.

REPORTS FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS

GROUP 1: POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND GOVERNANCE

The group looked at three questions:

1. What kind of government system stands the best chance of success?
2. What are the major challenges faced by the government?
3. What is the role of donors and implementers?

Discussion points:

- The Cabinet of the interim government is spread thin.
- The loya jirga will determine the future leadership of the country and will set government priorities.
- Afghanistan is “governable” based on historical precedents.
- Strengthening the central government is important.
- Voter education might be worthwhile.
- The changing nature and the fragility of civil society groups in Afghanistan must be taken into account.

Challenges:

1. Dealing with the warlords.
2. Balance of ethnicity.

GROUP 2: PROMOTING WOMEN’S EQUALITY

The group looked at short and long-term priorities for women’s equality.

Priorities:

1. Strengthen and support the Ministry of Women’s Affairs.
2. Ensure that women and women’s issues are represented at the loya jirga.
3. Build the capacity of women-led NGOs and community groups.
4. Consult with women’s organizations in planning for reconstruction.
5. Do a gender analysis in every sector to help guide programming.

Other issues:

- Women’s rights and equality as related to *sharia* - Afghan women take the lead.
- Women’s rights must be viewed within the cultural context.

There is a need to share examples of effective programs with the public and Congress.

GROUP 3: REBUILDING THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The group looked at three questions:

1. What are the major challenges in reconstructing the agricultural sector?
2. What strategies and program options are most appropriate and likely to be successful?
3. What needs to be communicated to political leaders to ensure that women’s special needs are being met and their potential to contribute to long-term development is realized?

Challenges in reconstructing the agricultural sector:

1. Security.
2. Infrastructure development.

3. Brain drain.
4. Dysfunctional food system from input to supply.
5. Access to water.
6. Shortage of labor.

Strategies:

1. Utilize homegrown solutions.
2. Establish corridors of security.
3. Start with a focus on subsistence.
4. Identify high-value opportunities.
5. Make appropriate interventions in the agricultural value chain.
6. Work closely with local NGOs.
7. Hand off programs to local NGOs as soon as possible.

Gender Concerns:

1. Determine how involved women are already and how involved they want to be.
2. Communicate to leaders that women are a tremendous resource.
3. Assist in coalescing women's and action groups.

**GROUP 4: EDUCATION SECTOR
RECONSTRUCTION**

The group addressed the challenges by talking about the context in Afghanistan.

Challenges:

1. Overcoming the strong impact of the Taliban.
2. Destruction of infrastructure.

3. Brain drain
4. Changed cultural values as a result of the Taliban rule, including family relationships
5. Severe lack of resources
6. Lack of security
7. Lack of policy consistency in terms of governments for the past 20 years
8. Effects of long-term deprivation of education on the population
9. Lack of teacher training
10. Uncertainty among returning Afghans about how their degrees will be recognized.

Strategies:

1. Restore the infrastructure of schools, from buildings to school supplies.
2. Train teachers in subject matter, curriculum development and administration.
3. Rely on employees, not volunteers.
4. Develop high level political commitment to education.
5. Educate adults, as well as girls and boys, particularly in literacy skills.
6. Recognize that this is going to be a gradual transformation.
7. Rely on Afghan-Americans with the needed language skills.
8. Use non-formal and mass communication systems creatively.

*There must be
a high level
political
commitment
to education.*

Mark Your Calendars!

Next ACVFA Meetings:

May 22, 2002

October 9, 2002

Washington, DC

This summary of the ACVFA public meeting has been prepared and distributed by the USAID Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. The full report is available from ACVFA Program Assistant, 1331 H Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005-4706 or e-mail: pvcsupport@datexinc.com. Visit our website at www.usaid.gov/hum_response/pvc/acvfadir.html.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
VOLUNTARY FOREIGN AID (ACVFA)**

FEBRUARY 20, 2002

Meeting Report

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