

**AFGHANISTAN'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS:  
IS ENOUGH AID REACHING AFGHANISTAN?**

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**HEARINGS**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN  
AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL  
OPERATIONS AND TERRORISM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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## AFGHANISTAN'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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Wednesday, October 10, 2001

U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN  
AFFAIRS, AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL  
OPERATIONS AND TERRORISM,

*Washington, D.C.*

The subcommittees met at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-419, the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Paul Wellstone (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Wellstone, Biden, Dodd, Boxer, and Nelson.

Senator WELLSTONE [presiding]. This hearing, which will be a joint Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, Near Eastern and South Asian, and International Operations Committees will come to order.

Let me thank all for being here. We will have brief opening statements, and then we will go to Mr. Natsios who is the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and then Christina Rocca, who is Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, and then Alan Kreczko, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population. We will go in that order by protocol.

The second panel will be Mr. Nicolas de Torrente, Executive Director of Doctors Without Borders; Ken Bacon, president of Refugees International, and also Ms. Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority.

Let me at the outset—and I think each of us will try to keep our statements brief. I want to thank Senator Boxer for agreeing to co-chair this hearing with me, and I want to thank all of the participants who have taken time away from pressing work to be here to testify today.

The September 11 attacks in New York and Washington require our country to respond assertively and effectively against international terrorism. As the administration takes military action inside Afghanistan, I believe we must also take urgent steps now to address the humanitarian crisis there.

Even before the world focused on it as a sanctuary for Osama bin Laden and other terrorists, Afghanistan was on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe, the site of the greatest crisis in hunger and refugee displacement in the world. Now the worsening situation on the ground is almost unimaginable. After four years of relentless drought, the worst in three decades, and the total failure of the Taliban government in administering the country, 4 million people have abandoned their homes in search of food in Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan and elsewhere, while those left behind eat meals

of locusts and animal fodder; 7.5 million people inside the country are threatened by famine or severe hunger as cold weather approaches, according to the United Nations.

As President Bush made clear, we are waging a campaign against terrorists, not ordinary Afghans, who are some of the poorest and most beleaguered people on the planet and were our allies during the Cold War, when it suited our interests. We abandoned Afghanistan then—we can never afford to do so again. I have said before that I believe any military action must be targeted against those responsible for the terror attacks and those harboring them, planned to minimize the danger to innocent civilians on the edge of starvation, and prepared to address any humanitarian consequences immediately.

Osama bin Laden is not a native of Afghanistan, but of Saudi Arabia. Most Afghans do not support bin Laden. Instead, ninety percent of the Afghan people are subsistence farmers struggling simply to grow enough food to stay alive. War widows, orphans, and thousands of others in the cities are dependent upon international aid to survive.

Now, fearing the effects of the military attacks and forcible conscription by the Taliban, almost a million Afghan civilians are on the move, fleeing the cities for their native villages or for the borders.

We all agree that there is a humanitarian disaster on the ground. We all agree that we—the United States—cannot turn our backs again on the people in Afghanistan as we did after the defeat of the Soviet Union; and we also, I think, agree that the terrorists are our enemy, not innocent civilians in Afghanistan.

Inside Afghanistan, the United Nations World Food Program aid, much of it U.S.-donated wheat, was the sole source of food for millions. UNWFP announced yesterday that it was stopping all food shipments to Afghanistan, citing the danger the fighting posed to its truck convoys. Our first priority must be to enhance security for these convoys to get food immediately to the maximum number of people inside the country. Let me repeat that. Our first priority must be to enhance security for these convoys to get food immediately to the maximum number of people inside the country.

To get needed aid in and slow the outflow of Afghan refugees driven by lack of food at home, the United States must urge the Pakistani government to immediately relax its border restrictions enough to allow the flow of food and other humanitarian into Afghanistan, while maintaining border security.

There is no easy solution to this building crisis, and yet our Government must aggressively seek solutions to the critical needs of Afghan civilians. As one of its most urgent tasks, the United States must do its part to shore up relief operations and help to again get aid flowing to the people inside Afghanistan now.

While food deliveries inside Afghanistan must be the priority, air drops of food are not enough and will not necessarily reach those in need. We also must prepare for an already critical situation to worsen as Afghanistan heads into its notoriously harsh winter. We must prepare now for huge numbers of refugees and humanitarian problems in the aftermath of military strikes, prepositioning in the region the people and resources that we need to deal with.

Particular concern must be paid to the special nutritional, health, and shelter needs of women and children who will make up the bulk of the refugees. The United States must do everything it can now to alleviate the suffering of ordinary Afghan civilians. While President Bush pledged \$320 million, the need is immense. The United Nations has said that \$584 million will be needed to protect and assist 7.5 million Afghans from now until the winter snows melt. We have agreed to participate in U.N. efforts to raise funds more quickly.

The United States and our allies must lead this effort, especially now as we seek to build a coalition of moderate Arab and non-Arab Muslims around the globe for our anti-terror efforts. If the humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan is attributed to our military operations, it could pull apart our international coalition to fight terrorism, radicalize more people who might be sympathetic to the terrorist views, and may even make the American people more vulnerable in the end.

Finally, any successful operation against terrorism in Afghanistan requires that we help the Afghan people establish a legitimate government there and to rebuild their country. I join my colleague Senator Biden and appreciate his fine work in calling for a \$1 billion long-term economic reconstruction program for the region. Such a package must target the restoration of a woman's right that was destroyed by the Taliban by providing secular schools for girls, including the creation of full-scale hospitals and clinics.

As we have seen in the case of the schools, the absence of basic social services creates a vacuum to be filled by radical extremist groups. Moreover, we must work to rebuild the shattered infrastructure by laying roads, drilling wells for clean drinking water, and providing a range of developmental projects. We as a country have a great challenge before us; and for our sake and for the sake of the Afghans, we must match our words with strong, generous actions.

I thank again all of you for being panelists, all of you for being here, and I now turn this over to Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. This is a rare time when we do join hands in subcommittees, because there is a lot of oftentimes duplication; and we so much wanted to work together on this situation, this humanitarian crisis that is developing, so we teamed up today.

I want to thank Senator Biden, our chairman, for encouraging us to do this; and I want to thank my colleague, Chris Dodd who in 1997 was really the first one to call attention to the horrors visited upon the women of Afghanistan from the Taliban.

And my last thank you for the moment is to the Fund for a Feminist Majority who came to me in about 1998 and helped me get through the Senate and sign into law a resolution which I co-authored with Senator Brownback, urging the Clinton administration at that time not to recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government of Afghanistan; and I was happy that we did that resolution again, and the Bush administration and the Clinton administration both followed through. I am just thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for supporting us in this hearing.

The events of September 11 and this weekend's military action have focused the world's attention on what was visited upon our country and our people. The sheer terror of what happened is seared into our brains, and it has also focused attention on the people of Afghanistan; and I think that this administration is doing everything it can to get the message across that this military action is not aimed at the people. The people are our friends.

We want to help them. It is such an amazing thing to remember the bombs dropping and the food dropping, but we are on a two-track path here to defeat the Taliban who are harboring terrorists and yet to feed the people and make the people whole once again.

The other thing the Fund for a Feminist Majority did is to come to me way before any of this this year and say, we have got to do more for the people there; we have the humanitarian crisis there. And that was before, Mr. Chairman, before September 11, and we were trying to wrap our arms around the size of the package, and it was so big that it was unbelievable. I am so glad, Mr. Chairman, that you stepped in. I think there is probably great agreement on the driving forces behind this crisis.

First, the nearly continuous war that for more than 20 years has decimated Afghanistan and killed an estimated 1.5 million people; second, a devastating drought that has affected much of Afghanistan's population, killing livestock, destroying crops, and creating the worst famine in decades; third, the illegitimate Taliban regime that forces its extreme interpretation of Islam on the people of Afghanistan.

Through its Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the Taliban carries out punishment such as stonings, hangings, floggings, and amputation of limbs. They use food as a weapon. The Taliban is very harsh on women who may not go to work, go to school, and must black out the windows of their homes. In my office, I have a burqa that women must wear that was given to me by my friends from California. I have it hanging there as a reminder of what women go through. They are made invisible. They are not human, and in many ways really don't exist. That burqa says it all. If you put that on, you can barely breathe.

It is an incredible situation. The women can't go to work; they can't go to school; they can't see a male doctor.

Since the schools are closed, who are they going to go to for their health care? They die in tremendous numbers giving birth. The infant mortality rate is impossible to imagine.

The final cause is the fact that the United States turned its back on Afghanistan following the Cold War.

Again, this is something I think everyone in both parties has agreed on. It was a mistake we must now take action to correct. It is also a reason why a strong U.S. humanitarian response is crucial to prove without a doubt what I said about the Bush administration's dual track, that we are fighting terrorism, not the Afghan people, and also certainly not Islam.

In closing, I want to tell you that in *Time Magazine* last spring—and so that is before all of this—there was a story about an 8-year-old boy who died in a refugee camp.

Prior to the boy's death, his father had waited in line in the camp clinic from dawn to dusk with hundreds of others stricken with tuberculosis, measles, bronchitis, and other diseases.

This child had pneumonia, and when the boy's father finally reached the front of the line, he received 12 aspirin. That is all, and the child died.

We must do better. We can do better, and we will do better. I am looking forward to our two panels. I am so happy that, Mr. Chairman, you have joined us. It means a lot to both Paul and to me. Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. Senator Boxer, we will try and go, if it is okay with Senator Dodd and Senator Biden, we will each try to keep under five minutes, because we have two panels. Senator Dodd.

Senator DODD. Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you for doing this, along with Senator Boxer. It is very valuable. We have wonderful witnesses to hear from. I appreciate Senator Boxer entering the 1997 resolution in February of that year, which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed, I think, unanimously. The House didn't act on that resolution. Not that the resolutions are necessarily going to change things, but this is not a recent phenomenon. We identified, in the language I wrote then, not only the human rights condition but also the harboring of terrorists and the potential problems the Taliban posed.

It has been said over and over again here now by Senator Wellstone and Senator Boxer, and it needs to be repeated, and that is, of course, our quarrel, to put it mildly, is with the Taliban and with the terrorist organizations they support, and not with the people of Afghanistan. It is vitally important that be repeated as often as possible so that message may get through to the millions of people who are suffering.

The map here that you are going to have before you outlines some of the drought areas, the worst drought in memory. Many people say literally millions of people's very lives are hanging in the balance. It has been recommended by Senator Biden among others to have a significant humanitarian commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

The pressures are huge. The ebola virus—or something like it—may have broken out in the camps in Pakistan. They are closing down borders, creating even more pressures on this desperate population seeking to avoid the hostilities in their countries, seeking some security, some sustenance in these camps. The pressures on Pakistan as well as on the people operating these camps are going to be tremendous. They already are.

So, while we are pressing the conflict against the Taliban and the terrorist organizations, it is going to be critically important—the success of the military campaign, in my view, will bear directly on our ability to succeed in humanitarian campaign, and if we wait to complete one before starting the other, we will fail. This has got to be as much an effort as the military campaign is, or we run the risk of millions of people losing their lives, not because of what we are doing, obviously, but because of what the Taliban is doing.

But you can fill the ranks of those who would become the foot soldiers of these organizations if we don't understand the dimen-

sions of the human problem that exists, so I am grateful for the hearing and look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Senator WELLSTONE. We will first hear from Chairman Biden.

The CHAIRMAN (Senator Biden, chairman of the full committee). I just want to thank my colleagues for being willing to do this and explain my absence. I am chairing the hearing on the new drug director, drug czar, downstairs in the Judiciary Committee, and both Senators Wellstone and Boxer have done a great deal of work in this area for a long time, and so it is not only appropriate. It is a bit unusual for two subcommittees to hold a joint hearing, but the two of them have been so deeply involved and concerned about this area of the world, Afghanistan and particularly the Taliban precisely, that it is appropriate that this be done.

Let me begin by saying that you are going to be preaching to the choir here. I have had the chance to meet with the administration extensively on this, and I must tell you, and I will say publicly, I am extremely pleased by the way in which the Secretary of State has led in this area, and I not only have not gotten resistance to the proposal I have made.

Quite frankly, it was a little bit of unofficial collaboration that went on here in terms of the proposal, so I don't want anyone to think I am making that speech on the floor and talking about an immediate billion dollars and a long-term commitment is necessarily an abridgement with me. I don't want to get anyone into trouble, but there are a significant number of people in the administration in high positions who feel very strongly that this is not only the short-term commitment but long-term commitment.

I had the opportunity, I would say to our co-chairs, yesterday to spend a little over an hour with the President on this very subject. I am absolutely convinced the President understands the need for this to be a long haul, and I think this may be the first time in the history of warfare where literally as we are dropping bombs, we are dropping food, not follow-on, but as we are dropping bombs, we are dropping food.

We are dropping 350,000 meals. There would be enough sustenance for an individual person for one day and 350,000 we have also committed. I think it is too little, but I think it is great that it has begun over \$350 million toward what Kofi Annan has suggested is needed for the next six months of roughly \$450 million. Through the leadership of the administration, the rest of our friends around the world have pledged the remainder of that money up front.

I met today with Lord Robertson of NATO, and one of the issues we talked about—and everyone understands this is the guy heading the NATO operation—the arrow is in the talon, and not the peaceful side of this equation, and that the only discussion was about what we do after we, quote, win. That is after the hostilities cease, and so there is an overwhelming, I think, understanding on the part of most of the members of Congress, I hope, and most of the members of the administration, I know, for the need for this to be a long-term operation, and it is not only when the last Russian troop crossed the Afghan border heading north.

Not only did they leave Afghanistan, but Afghanistan left the consciousness of all but a few here in the United States Congress.

I was here, so—and I am not laying this on anyone else. I was here. There was not nearly enough attention paid, but because of my three colleagues here, including Senator Dodd, they tried to keep a focus on it, and the truth of the matter is not enough of us listened as well as we should have, and the world surely didn't. We kind of hoped this would go away.

So that I just want to say I know you are going to be preaching to the choir a little bit. I know we are not going to use words like “nation-building,” because that scares the hell out of the Republicans, and you beat up the former President for years on it, and you are about to do it, thank God. But what I want to make clear here is we are talking about draining the swamp. That is a phrase that has become almost a cliché these days, draining the swamp, where these terrorists are able to breed, if you will. Well, once we drain the swap, we had better plan something in that swamp.

There had better be something that is put in its place. It better be something that fills the swamp, again what was the swamp.

And so, I think that the long-term solution includes such important items as secular education for both boys and girls in Afghanistan. It will serve two purposes. It will break the grip the radical religious academies have on that part of the world, because of the void that has been left. I mean, as you all know—and I know this, again, is preaching to the choir—the administration witnesses know half the reason why half these young men are in these academies, it is the only place their parents could put them, knowing they would get three square meals a day and get clothed, and the choice was an easy one for them to make.

But it has had a devastating impact upon the mentality and attitude of the region, and so I think that no wonder this is a nation that is in ruins, when you keep half your population, the women of a population, in such a subservient position, there is no possibility of you progressing. And so one of the things we can do is literally with the rest of the world see to their secular education.

We could be involved extensively in demining operations.

We can be involved in crop substitution for the narcotics, because they are the world's foremost producer of opium, and basic infrastructure projects like wells, water purification and hospitals, village hospitals, village clinics, *et cetera*, and this cost is going to be very, very high. We should not kid each other. We are talking about billions of dollars. we are not talking about \$100 million or 200 or 500.

We are talking about \$585 million just to keep people from dying in these camps over this winter, so this is a gigantic cost, and my plea to the administration and to my colleagues—and I don't have to plead to these three, because they are ahead of me on this—is that the same fervor with which we put together this coalition to take on this cancer that we were awakened to in a horrible manner on one month ago today is the same coalition we have to keep together to see to it that we don't allow the same swamp to fill up again, coming out of our naked self-interest.

If anything is going to demonstrate to us that we cannot stand alone, that we cannot unilaterally dictate the outcome of our future, it is what has happened in Afghanistan. What has happened in Afghanistan, we are bearing the brunt of now, right now in

terms of us being under siege. And so just as the fight against terrorism is truly a fight for all nations, I think the fight against destitution and despair that breeds terrorism is the fight of all nations.

Again, thank you, both of you, for doing this, and thank the administration. I am going to tell you what I said—and I have said this straight out—I kid with the Secretary. He says, For God's sake, don't compliment me too much; it hurts my reputation. But all kidding aside, I think the administration has stepped up to the ball here in a way that I must tell you, I did not expect. And for that I publicly apologize for not expecting it.

But you have stepped up to it. You have stepped up to it in a way that I think has thus far been absolutely first rate, and I have never once had a conversation at State—and I have had many, as you know—I have never once had a conversation at State where anybody ended the sentence by saying, And when we get Al-Qaeda, we leave. Nobody is thinking that way now.

Although there are a number of people in the administration who do think that way, who you have not—thus far have not been able to convince, the President—your view has been the one the President seems to have embraced, and so as Jim Eastland once said to me back in 1978 when I was running a tough reelection campaign, I walked into the Senate dining room one afternoon as we were about to adjourn sine die, and the old conservative chairman of the Judiciary Committee on which I served looked at me. I must have been flunking what I called the slope-of-the-shoulder test, and that is, I was running, and I guess I was looking like this.

And when anybody says, How are you doing in your race, and you go, Oh, I am doing great, you know you are losing. If you stand up and say, I don't know, okay, you know they are winning. I must have been flunking that test. He called me over, and he said, Do you need help in Delaware. I said, Mr. Chairman, I do need a lot of help. He said, What would Jim Eastland do for you in Delaware. I said, In some parts you would help me, Mr. Chairman, and in some parts, you would hurt. And he took that cigar out of his mouth and—This is an absolutely true story. You used to be able to smoke in the dining room then. And he looked at me, and he said, Well, Joe, I will come and campaign for you or ag'in' you, whichever will help the most. I want the administration to know, I will say bad things about you and good things about you, whichever will help the most in you continuing this process.

Excuse me. I have just been corrected. Not 350,000; 35,000 meals have been dropped so far, but that is just the very beginning. So at any rate, I thank you for what you have been doing. Keep up the work. You have got a lot more to do, and together we have got to convince the American people that what the President says, he means. This is not going to be done in a short time, and part of this process is the very thing my colleagues are working.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Natsios, again, Administrator, United States Agency for International Development.

**STATEMENT OF MR. ANDREW S. NATSIOS, ADMINISTRATOR,  
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOP-  
MENT**

Mr. NATSIOS. Thank you, Senators. Thank you for inviting me and my colleagues here for this extremely important and timely hearing on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Afghanistan truly is a country in crisis, a crisis that well predates the events of September 11 by many years.

Three years of drought and 22 years of conflict and five years of brutal Taliban misrule have brought untold suffering to millions of people. The long drought has caused the near total failure of rain-fed crops in 18 of the 29 provinces in the country. Only 10 or 12 percent of the country is now arable, and much of that land cannot be used due to mines and fighting that has raged about the country since the Soviet invasion in 1979.

Thirty percent of the Afghans' irrigation infrastructure has been damaged or fallen into disrepair, rendering about half of the irrigated land completely unusable. In 1979, Afghanistan was able to feed itself. Last year, the food deficit was 1.8 million metric tons. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates the country will only produce 10,000 of the 400,000 metric tons of seed that it will need for this fall's winter wheat crop, and next spring's planting, and we know the reason why.

Most of the seed has already been eaten by farmers who fear that they may not survive until the next crop. That is the typical famine coping mechanism. It is where people consume their feed if they do not think they are going to survive to the next crop.

Approximately 12 million people, almost half of the nation's inhabitants, have been affected by the drought.

Between the fighting and the drought, upwards of 3 million people have been driven from the country and are living as refugees. Another million are internally displaced, and many thousands more are unable to move due to sickness, injury, disability or hunger.

The WFP, the World Food Program, distributes on a wholesale basis into the country, and then the NGOs distribute to people directly inside the country. Estimates are that food stocks in the country are critically short, and they are aggressively seeking to move food into the country.

As of this morning, I talked with Catherine Bertini, my good friend who is the director, the executive director of the World Food Program, and she told me that WFP had just sent convoys out from four countries with 3,300 metric tons of food from Iran, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan into the country so the food deliveries that were suspended on Saturday have resumed, and Catherine and I agreed we needed to push those deliveries before the snows arrive in the high mountain areas of the Hindu Kush, among the highest peaks in the world.

Many people don't realize the terrain in central Afghanistan is very similar to Tibet's. There is a high plateau very similar to those in Tibet, and the highest peak is 25,000 feet high. Mt. Everest is 29,000 feet. These are not small mountains; these are huge mountain ranges, and there are millions of people who live in those mountains.

Although WFP wasn't able last week or as of Monday to hire commercial truckers to take food in, its operations nevertheless have proceeded as of this morning, as I just mentioned. The international community who I understand is here today has been able to maintain the programs in many parts of the country. We met with the major NGOs last night, the American NGOs that are doing the retail food distributions, individuals, and a number of them told me there has been no disruption to their operations at all.

The conflict is really confined to certain areas of the country. There are large parts of the area in which distributions have continued and aid programs have continued.

There are, however, 1.5 million Afghans who are seriously at risk of starvation this winter, and there are another 5 to 7 million Afghans facing critical food shortages and are partially or fully dependent on outside assistance for their survival.

One of the first actions I took when I was confirmed administrator of USAID at the beginning of May this year was to order an assessment conducted by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, working with the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. They did an assessment with U.N. agencies inside the country, and they came to the conclusion that Afghanistan was on the verge of widespread and precipitous famine.

Based on this and other information and with the support of Secretary Powell, I ordered the disaster assistance response team into the region in June. It has been there ever since, and it has continued to work with NGOs. We have also increased by 100,000 tons the food commitments. This was in early June. This was preceding, well preceding September 11.

Our aid program in Afghanistan in the last fiscal year, again preceding this event, the events in the United States, was \$184 million, 300,000 tons of food. It was one of our largest humanitarian relief operations. It was based purely on need, need of the Afghan people because of the civil war and the drought.

There is a terrible need inside Afghanistan. I am not going to go through the entire testimony I provided, but I want to focus on five key strategies that we are pursuing to deal with this emergency. The first and primary response is to reduce the death rates. That is our first principle in all that we do. How can we drive the death rates of this famine down?

The famine has not peaked. Famines move in chronological cycle, and if you look at famines, you will see rising death rates. They peak; then they begin to diminish, and they get down to a normal level after a year or two. We have not yet peaked. In fact, we are at the beginning of the rise in these death rates. In the assessment that was done in May, we noticed in some villages six, sometimes eight people were dying per 10,000 people each day.

In the OFDA doctrine and public health doctrine, usually in our public health schools, if more than two people a day die per 10,000 people, it means there is a severe food emergency. In most of our cities and towns in the United States, half a person dies—or a person dies every other day. If you took a town of 10,000 people, and you did the statistics for a year, you would notice one death every other day. So if you have two every day, you know that the rate

has gone up dramatically. If you have six to eight, you have a famine.

And, in fact, in some villages, those rates were—had reached that level last spring, and if you add the numbers up, that means 30 percent of the village would be dead within a 365-day period. So you can see how severe it was in certain areas. It had not spread across the whole country. We were seeing it begin to appear, and that is the typical pattern in famines.

The second thing we are doing is to minimize population movements. People move for two reasons: one, for security, and they cross international boundaries because of that, to refugee camps, to displaced camps inside the country. But they also move because they are hungry, and that is generally a post-famine indicator in certain regions. People leave their village when they have absolutely no options left, when there is no food on the way. That is when they start dying.

They have no other way of surviving.

We do not want population movements in a famine, simply because when people are acutely malnourished, they do not last, particularly when it gets cold. Complicating this dramatically is the severe winter in much of Afghanistan. If this were a tropical climate, we would not have as high death rates this winter, but these are arctic regions. In some of the regions of the Hindu Kush, the snow is 20 to 30 feet deep and is completely inaccessible the entire winter.

So we do not want population movements. Fifty percent of the people will either die during the movements, or when they arrive in the camp, they will be so debilitated they cannot be revived, so we do not want population—to the extent that we can avoid them by moving food into people's villages, into their neighborhoods, the famine reason for moving will be at least dealt with. If they are moving for security reasons, that is another matter.

The third thing we are doing is something that is not commonly known publicly, but we do this all the time in famines, and that is to deal on the commercial side, not through the aid agencies, although the aid agencies help us do this, is we sell food in specific markets to get the price down. A lot of Afghans survive on remittances. The Afghan diaspora of educated Afghans in the United States is very large. They send remittances back to their relatives, and extended families of 100, 150 people will survive on those remittances. We see this in famine after famine.

If food prices go up 30 to 50 percent, which they have since September 11 in many cities in Afghanistan, it means they can buy half as much food for their extended families.

So what we want to do is get the food prices down to a stable, normal level, and keep it there for the remainder of the famine. So we will use what we call contra-famine market strategies to keep food at a normal level.

The fourth strategy is to make sure food gets to where it is intended to go. We do not want it diverted. We do not want it manipulated, and there are some strategies, if you are interested, that I can go over that we are assuming to do that.

Fifth, we are beginning most importantly what we call developmental relief, another term we don't use publicly, but for many

years the NGOs—and I was with one for five years, and I was with the first Bush administration where we did this very effectively. We used relief resources to do development work in the middle of civil wars and famines and emergencies.

And we do that, for example, through food-for-work projects.

In Somalia in 1991, we repaired almost the entire irrigation system of the lower Shebele Valley, using food-for-work in a famine to keep people alive. It was also the same farmers who will get the water from the irrigation systems that were being repaired. There was a dramatic increase in food production as a result of this developmental relief intervention.

The NGOs we met with, and the U.N. agencies, have agreed that the best strategy to pursue is to use the food-for-work incentive for people who are able-bodied, to do food for work, to increase family incomes, to increase the resources in the village so that we can begin the reconstruction of the country now and not wait until the end of the civil war is over or the end or the end of the military campaign.

Senator WELLSTONE. Mr. Natsios, can I ask you to finish.

Mr. NATSIOS. Anyway, that is our strategy, and we are pursuing that right now, and we will aggressively pursue it in the future. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Andrew S. Natsios follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW S. NATSIOS

Madam Chairman, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here for this extremely important and timely hearing on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

#### INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan today is a country in crisis, a crisis that predates the events of September 11 by many years. Three years of drought, 22 years of conflict, and five years of brutal Taliban misrule, have brought untold suffering to millions of people.

The long drought has caused the near-total failure of rain-fed crops in 18 provinces. Only ten to twelve percent of the country is arable, and much of that land cannot be used due to land mines and the fighting that has raged about the country since the Soviet invasion of 1979. Thirty percent of Afghanistan's irrigation infrastructure has been damaged or fallen into disrepair, rendering about a half of the irrigated lands unusable.

In 1979, Afghanistan was able to feed itself. By last year, 2.3 million metric tons (MT) of food had to be imported. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that the country will only produce 10,000 of the 400,000 MT of seed that it will need for next year's planting. We know the reason: most of the seed has already been eaten by farmers who fear they may not survive until the next crop.

Approximately 12 million people, almost half of the country's inhabitants, have been affected by the drought. Between the fighting and the drought upwards of 3 million people have been driven from the country and are living as refugees. Another 700,000 are internally displaced. Many, many thousands more are unable to move, due to illness, hunger, injury, or disability.

The World Food Program (WFP), which distributes most of the food within Afghanistan, estimates that food stocks in the country are critically short and they are aggressively seeking to move food into the country. Although WFP was unable to identify commercial truckers to take food in on Monday of this week, its operations are otherwise proceeding as planned with deliveries yesterday and today going on schedule. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been able to maintain their programs in many parts of the country, especially those areas where there is no military activity, through the efforts of thousands of dedicated local Afghan staff, many of whom have worked for these organizations for decades.

Still, we believe that 1.5 million Afghans risk starvation by winter's end and that between five and seven million Afghans face critical food shortages and are partially or fully dependent on outside assistance for survival.

#### ACTIONS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 11

One of the first actions I took as the Administrator of USAID was to order an assessment conducted by a team from our Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, working with the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Their conclusion was inescapable: Afghanistan was "on the verge of widespread and precipitous famine."

Based on this and other information, and with the support of Secretary Powell, I ordered a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to the region. They arrived in June and have been operating in the region ever since. Since then, we have focused on Afghanistan's humanitarian needs as never before. Through closer cooperation with the UN specialized agencies and the NGOs with whom we work, we have been able to target our efforts more precisely toward those who need it most.

The United States, of course, has been monitoring and helping the people in Afghanistan for many years. In the fiscal year that just ended and in the few days since, the U.S. Government donated \$184 million in humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people. This includes a variety of programs run by the Department of Agriculture, the Department of State and USAID.

Our country has long been the largest donor to the World Food Program's Afghan humanitarian assistance program. Approximately, 85 percent of the WFP food aid in the pipeline now—45,000 MT stored in Pakistan and another 165,000 MT on the way comes directly from the United States.

The President has now added another \$320 million of new money to this humanitarian effort.

#### HUMANITARIAN SITUATION INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

According to our DART, the conditions in many areas of Afghanistan are well beyond the "Pre-famine" stage. As best we can judge, the situation will only get worse with the coming winter.

While most people comprehend famine as a dramatic increase in death rates due to starvation and hunger-related illnesses, there are a number of famine indicators that relief experts look for when reliable information on death rates or malnutrition levels is not readily available. These indicators include the following:

- Seed shortages due to increased cost of seed and/or consumption of seed stocks;
- Widespread sale of family assets, including land, homes, domesticated animals, and family possessions, to raise money to buy food;
- Rising prices of food staples and hoarding of grain stocks by dealers;
- Consumption of wild foods, domesticated animals, and inedible materials;
- Increased rates of wasting due to malnutrition and other nutritional disorders;
- Declining birth rates;
- Mass migration in search of food and employment; and
- Increased deaths from starvation and related diseases.

In Afghanistan, NGOs, UN agencies, and the media are reporting evidence of nearly every one of these indicators. The Afghan people are tough, seasoned by many years of war and conflict. But many have exhausted their ability to cope. Their resources are exhausted, their animals dead, sold or eaten. They enter this crisis in an extraordinarily weakened state. Apart from the many sick, weak and disabled, the most vulnerable population lives in remote regions, often at very high altitude, cut off from most efforts to provide food or seed.

We are now seeing whole communities on the move, and many villages abandoned altogether. Although precise statistics are hard to come by, many families have resorted to desperate measures, selling their draft animals, mixing their food with inedible substances, selling off their last possessions, or marrying off their daughters to strangers at an abnormally young age.

While we have not been able to collect data on food prices fully, there are ample signs that prices have risen rapidly in certain places, even as family income plummets. In major Afghan cities, food prices have increased between 30 and 50 percent in the past month. Most alarmingly, there is evidence of abnormally high death rates in some parts of the country.

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE STRATEGY

President Bush's strategy to deal with this vast and complicated humanitarian crisis is designed to accomplish five critical objectives:

- reduce death rates;
- minimize population movements;
- lower and then stabilize food prices so that food in markets is more accessible;
- ensure that aid reaches those it is intended for; and
- begin developmental relief programs, in which we can move beyond emergency relief, where possible, to begin long-overdue reconstruction projects.

## REDUCE DEATH RATES

Our primary goal, of course, is to prevent as many people from dying as possible. Winter is fast approaching, so time is clearly of the essence. We must get as much food as possible into the country as soon as possible, particularly to the mountain areas of the Hindu Kush. This means doubling the amount of tonnage going in, at the very least, from approximately 25,000 MT per month to 50,000 MT. We are opening all possible pipelines to move food, seed, and other emergency commodities such as blankets and health kits into the country to increase the volume of aid. Health care, nutritional surveillance, and water and sanitation programs are also vital to the success of the aid effort.

## MINIMIZE POPULATION MOVEMENTS

When people have sold all their assets for food, and have run out of options, many leave their villages to find food or work. In other famines, we know that as many as 50 percent will die along the way or in famine-induced refugee or internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. So we must do everything we can to encourage people to stay in their villages by moving as much food as possible into the villages and rural areas. The million or more refugees that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has predicted has not materialized thus far. One of our objectives is to see that it never does.

## LOWER AND STABILIZE FOOD PRICES

We also need to do what we can to drive down the cost of food, so that ordinary Afghan citizens can buy what they and their families need. Many people die of hunger during famine not because of a shortage of food, but rather because of an inability to purchase food that is available due to skyrocketing prices. The best way to counter this is to sell significant amounts of food to local merchants in order to bring down prices and discourage hoarding. These merchants have their own means of protecting their goods even in the midst of general insecurity, and the incentive of profits to be made ensures that the food will reach the markets. Experience from other famine situations has shown this to be a particularly effective strategy, especially in smaller markets where even limited amounts can have a significant effect on prices.

## ENSURE AID REACHES THE INTENDED BENEFICIARIES

It will be necessary to do our utmost to keep U.S. Government humanitarian assistance out of the hands of the Taliban or other armed groups. Part of our strategy to do so is linked to our second goal, limiting population movements. By moving as much food as possible to remote villages and towns, we can help discourage people from concentrating in refugee and IDP camps, where the risk of manipulation by the Taliban and their supporters is comparatively high.

All such camps should be managed, and all food distributed, by experienced expatriates; to permit Afghan refugees or IDPs to distribute supplies or manage the camps, on the other hand, is to invite their manipulation by the Taliban or other extremist networks such as al-Qaeda.

At the same time, we must be prepared to shut down any program if the Taliban begins to loot or manipulate the aid. Where the security of the food is an issue in refugee or IDP camps, we should avoid distributing dry rations. Wet feeding programs in which prepared food is distributed directly to beneficiaries, rather than uncooked or dry rations, should be the norm wherever possible, even for adults, because cooked food spoils quickly, is heavier to move and harder to store, making it more difficult to steal and more likely that the intended beneficiaries will receive their rations.

By opening as many food pipelines into the country as possible, not only will we be able to move more food quickly to where it is needed, we will also minimize the distance any given aid convoy must travel to reach its destination, thereby reducing the opportunity for diversion. We will also make it our policy that no more than two weeks' worth of food is warehoused in areas the Taliban controls so as not to create attractive targets for looting.

Finally, we will also implement a humanitarian public information campaign so the Afghan people know aid is on the way. This will have the dual effect of helping to discourage further population movements, and will provide a check against diversion or manipulation of aid since people will know what they are supposed to receive through this information effort.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL RELIEF

The constant conflict that has plagued Afghanistan has kept people from rebuilding their homes and villages, their farms, their markets and their businesses. We intend to structure our relief programs so that they can begin this long-overdue process of smallscale reconstruction at the community level where conditions will allow. Our food-for-work programs, for example, will focus on practical sectors, such as agriculture. Distribution of seed for the winter wheat crop or even small-scale repairs of irrigation systems and wells can make a profound difference in the country's recovery from this crisis. If enough crops can be planted and livestock rebuilt, next year will not have to resemble this one.

#### COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN

The President and the Secretary have made very clear that the Afghan people are not our enemies. The President said on October 4 when he announced his new \$320 million initiative for the Afghan people: "We are a compassionate nation . . . We will work with the U.N. agencies, such as the World Food Program, and work with private volunteer organizations to make sure this assistance gets to the people. We will make sure that not only the folks in Afghanistan who need help get help, but we will help those who have fled to neighboring countries to get help as well."

With the new funds the President has added, we can redouble our efforts to get relief to those who need it most. Despite the events of September 11, and the fact that we have no diplomatic relations with the Taliban, and despite their refusal to hand over bin Laden and dismantle al-Qaeda, our humanitarian assistance policies will not change. Food aid distribution will be based on need. The President has made this very clear.

Accomplishing our humanitarian objectives under the current circumstances is a huge task, but I am confident that, if we follow the President's strategy, we can save many, many lives and help Afghanistan begin to rebuild itself. Let me assure you that we at the Agency for International Development are fully committed to doing everything we can to work with you in Congress, the other Executive Branch agencies, and the international community to accomplish these objectives.

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#### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR BIDEN TO USAID ADMINISTRATOR ANDREW NATSIOS

*Question.* How exactly is the \$320 million dollars President Bush pledged going to be spent? How much money is given to each agency, how is it spent and when does the pledge of money turn into the reality of assistance for people on the ground?

*Answer.* The \$320 million is allocated as follows:

- \$100 million in supplemental funding for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), to be managed by the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PPM). These funds will be used to provide support for refugees from Afghanistan resident in neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Iran, for their repatriation when the opportunity comes, and for support to the International Committee for the Red Cross. They may also be used to support coordination of United Nations operations through the UN's Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance.
- \$25 million in already appropriated funds from the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance account for the same purposes as the MPA funding, to be managed by State PPM.

- \$95 million of supplemental funding for P.L. 480 food aid to procure U.S. agricultural commodities such as wheat, vegetable oil, pulses and corn-soy blend and for transportation and distribution costs. These resources will be managed by USAID's Office of Food for Peace, working through the World Food Program (WFP) and U.S. private voluntary organizations.
- \$96 million of supplemental funding for the International Disaster Assistance account. These funds will be managed by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. They will be used to provide relief to the destitute victims of conflict and drought inside Afghanistan, including the internally displaced. They will be used to provide health, water and sanitation, blankets and children's warm clothes for winter, and necessary local food procurement. They will also support the logistical capacity of organizations such as the World Food Program. Most of the funds will be implemented by private voluntary organizations and the United Nations.
- \$3 million of supplemental funding for humanitarian demining, to be managed by the State Department's Bureau for Political and Military Affairs.
- \$1 million of supplemental funding for USAID's Operating Expenses.

Most of these funds will be managed through grants to implementing partners such as private voluntary organizations and the United Nations. The resources have been provided for humanitarian assistance through the winter. Much of it has already been obligated and is in the process of being expended.

*Question.* How much of our efforts should be aimed at increasing the supply of food for purchase as opposed to helping increase the amount of food aid? Should we task trucks and drivers with delivering food to markets for sale instead of channeling all available resources towards delivering the over 50,000 tons a month of relief commodities the World Food Program projects it needs to feed people in Afghanistan that can't purchase food?

*Answer.* According to the humanitarian community, food is available for purchase in most urban markets. Prices are back to pre-September 11 levels, except in areas of extreme insecurity where movement of market items has been disrupted (such as Kandahar). However, a lack of purchasing power in many areas means that some segments of the population are unable to purchase the food on the markets, even at "reasonable" prices. USAID is evaluating methods to increase the purchasing power of the poorest through micro-credit mechanisms and cash for work activities. This will stimulate the demand for commercial market development.

*Question.* You pointed out in your testimony that the tonnage of food going into Afghanistan should be doubled at the very least, and that all possible pipelines must be opened wide. How can we help the international aid agencies deliver double the amount of food that they are currently sending into Afghanistan?

*Answer.* From October 14 to November 14, the World Food Program moved 52,075 metric tons of food into Afghanistan, reaching the monthly goal of 52,000 MT. WFP is using all open corridors into Afghanistan. Therefore, the humanitarian community is now getting the monthly amount needed into the country. Due to insecurity, once the food is inside Afghanistan, it is not distributed to the beneficiaries as quickly as needed despite heroic efforts. Some areas are currently inaccessible. As the security situation stabilizes, we expect the internal distributions will meet the requirements.

*Question.* What plans is the Agency for International Development making for longer-term relief and development in the region?

*Answer.* USAID has developed an economic recovery plan in the context of a larger U.S. Government strategy for Afghanistan. The President has emphasized that U.S. involvement in longer-term development in Afghanistan must be part of a larger multilateral effort.

The key elements focus on restoration of essential services at the community level and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the near term, and on longer-term economic recovery. There will be a primary focus on women. Other target groups will include returnees and demobilized combatants. The primary sectors are:

- Livelihoods and Income Generation: community public works programs that generate labor as well as put in place critical community infrastructure (schools, potable water systems, health facilities, etc.); skills training; access to credit; and micro-enterprise development programs.

- Basic Education: support for community-based basic education programs, with specific attention to girls; and basic adult literacy programs.
- Food Security and Agriculture: distribution of seeds and tools; rehabilitation of critical irrigation facilities and rural feeder roads; distribution of breeding stocks of livestock; and re-establishment of local markets.
- Basic Health Needs: provision of immunizations and vitamin A; prevention and treatment of diarrheal disease and acute respiratory infection; infant and young child feeding; maternal health; and basic water and sanitation.
- Rule of Law, Democracy and Governance: assistance to local authorities in responding to the needs of citizens through service provision; encouraging the participation of women and minorities in government; training of female leaders in civil society development; supporting the establishment of select national and administrative procedures that promote accountability and participation; legal training and the effective administration of justice; and the re-establishment of Afghan-managed radio broadcasts and other means of information dissemination.

*Question.* Is there any effort underway to use Voice of America broadcasts to inform people about our airdrops of humanitarian daily rations?

*Answer.* USAID's program through the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) supports the development of relevant and timely information on humanitarian assistance for the Afghan population, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs), other vulnerable groups, and refugees. OTI is working with international and local partners to produce and broadcast relevant information in local languages, disseminate radios, and explore alternative media. The objectives of the program are to:

- Create awareness of existing U.S. Government and international relief efforts inside Afghanistan, including availability, location and rules of entitlement for food aid, shelter and primary health care activities.
- Prevent migration of large populations inside Afghanistan to neighboring countries when humanitarian assistance programs are functioning within the country.
- Increase access by vulnerable Afghan populations to relevant information via radio and alternative media so that international relief efforts are transparent and those involved in diversions are exposed.

OTI activities include:

- Afghanistan Emergency Information Project: An agreement with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to prepare a regular humanitarian information bulletin for radio dissemination, develop additional radio programming, and make small grants to local organizations to support information dissemination. Also, IOM will procure and distribute up to 30,000 radios to vulnerable Afghan populations, taking into account security considerations.
- Voice of America Enhanced Programming: An agreement with Voice of America (VOA) to significantly increase its news and information-gathering capacity in the Central Asia region to provide information to Afghans affected by the crisis. VOA, which broadcasts in both Dari and Pashto, will increase the number of reporters from two to ten. Support began in early November and will run for ninety days, with the possibility of an extension as conditions permit.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you for your testimony. I only do that, because we do want to have questions. We have a number of different perspectives, and I also worry about those later on, and so we want to make sure we keep the hearing going along. Thank you so much.

Ms. Rocca.

**STATEMENT OF MS. CHRISTINA ROCCA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIA, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ms. ROCCA. Well, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to appear before you with Mr. Natsios and Mr. Kreczko to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Andrew and Alan will speak to you on the details of the above cri-

sis. I will restrict my remarks to providing an overall political perspective. I will describe for you the context in which this crisis has fomented and grown.

It is important to bear in mind that the humanitarian crisis in the region did not begin on September 11. Its causes lie in the tragic history of Afghanistan over the last two decades. Twenty-two years of conflict have steadily devastated the country, destroyed its physical and political infrastructure, shattered its institutions, and wrecked its socio-economic fabric.

The crisis has been exacerbated by severe and prolonged drought, now in its fourth year. Average life expectancy in Afghanistan has been reduced to 46 years. According to the World Health Organization, the infant mortality rate at birth is 152 per 1,000 births. The mortality rate for children under five is 257 out of 1,000.

The Taliban have done nothing to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people. Rather, they have done much to intensify the anguish of Afghans by pursuing policies that victimize their own people and that target women and girls and ethnic minorities, as Senator Boxer pointed out. They have shown no desire to provide even the most rudimentary health, education, or other social services expected of any government.

Instead, they have chosen to devote their resources to waging war on the Afghan people and exporting instability to their neighbors. Instead, they have welcomed terrorists to provide them a safe haven and allowed Afghanistan to become the hub of international terrorism.

In contrast, the United States has been the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to the Afghans. As the President has said, our quarrel is not with the Afghan people; quite the opposite. President Bush announced last week a package of \$320 million in humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. This brings our food and non-food assistance to about \$680 million since 1999.

As the United States began military action this weekend against terrorists and Taliban defenses in Afghanistan, the military air-dropped tens of thousands of humanitarian assistance packages for the Afghan victims of this crisis.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has played its role in helping to ease the suffering of the Afghan people. Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.N. predicted that the situation would deteriorate even further.

We anticipate 5 to 7 million people will be at risk of famine, as Mr. Natsios pointed out, and that there will be a large scale of displacement of Afghans. Once again, we need to be clear. The blame for this lies squarely on the Taliban.

Their failure to comply with the international community's demands to hand over Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, to close down the terrorist training camps, and to release the foreign aid workers has resulted in further suffering for the Afghan people. They have continually obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance by the U.N. and other international agencies.

The Taliban and foreign terrorists they harbor bear responsibility for the political decay, economic devastation, and international isolation of what was once a proud, tolerant, and fiercely

independent land. Immediate humanitarian efforts have been directed at getting as much humanitarian assistance as possible into Afghanistan before the onset of winter, as Andrew was just talking about.

We are also preparing for the possible flow of refugees into neighboring countries. Alan Kreczko will elaborate on the refugee situation, but there are already 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. The U.N. estimates there will be hundreds of thousands more as the result of the current tensions. Most of these refugees are expected to come to Pakistan. We also expect smaller movements to Iran and other Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan.

To minimize displacement of people, we will provide assistance inside to the extent possible and for as long as possible. However, we are also urging all neighboring countries to allow entry of fleeing refugees.

Let me note that Pakistan has been a generous country of first asylum for millions of Afghans since 1979. We acknowledge that they have borne a heavy social and economic cost for this generosity. It has legitimate political and security concerns as a result of the large-scale refugee inflow. Yet Pakistan has given its unconditional cooperation to the international community in combating terrorism. We will work with Pakistan and the U.N. agencies to help them shoulder the economic and social costs of the current crisis.

We have already lifted many of the sanctions and are now assembling a package of economic assistance for Pakistan.

Iran, too, also has been a traditional host of Afghan refugees. We will work through U.N. agencies and others to make sure that resources are available for Afghans in Iran as well.

President Bush has taken the lead in responding to the Afghan humanitarian crisis, but other countries are also pledging to do their share, and Alan will be able to provide more details on this.

Finally, let me refer to President Bush's radio address this weekend. He raised the prospects of a future reconstruction and development package for Afghanistan. We are beginning the discussions with other potential donors, international financial institutions, and the U.N. to examine what the reconstruction needs will be for a future Afghanistan. We hope the internal situation will stabilize so that we can move forward on such a program.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Christina Rocca follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHRISTINA ROCCA

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you with Mr. Natsios and Mr. Kreczko to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Andrew and Alan will speak to you on the details of the evolving crisis and the U.S. response. I will be brief, and restrict my remarks to providing an overall political perspective. I will describe for you the context in which this crisis has fermented and grown.

It is important to bear in mind that the humanitarian crisis in the region did not begin on September 11. Its causes lie in the tragic history of Afghanistan over the last two decades. Twenty-two years of conflict have steadily devastated the country, destroyed its physical and political infrastructure, shattered its institutions, and wrecked its socio-economic fabric. The crisis has been exacerbated by a severe and prolonged drought, now in its fourth year. Average life expectancy in Afghanistan

has been reduced to 46 years; according to the World Health Organization, the infant mortality rate at birth is 152 per 1,000 births; the mortality rate for children under 5 is 257 per 1,000.

The Taliban have done nothing to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people. Rather, they have done much to intensify the anguish of Afghans by pursuing policies that victimize their own people, and that target women and girls and ethnic minorities. The Taliban have shown no desire to provide even the most rudimentary health, education, and other social services expected of any government. Instead, they have chosen to devote their resources to waging war on the Afghan people, and exporting instability to their neighbors. Instead, they have welcomed terrorists, provided them with safe haven and allowed Afghanistan to become the hub of international terrorism.

In contrast, the United States has been the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to Afghans. As the President has said, our quarrel is not with the Afghan people. Quite the opposite. President Bush announced last week a package of \$320 million in humanitarian assistance for Afghans. This brings our food and non-food assistance to about \$680 million since 1999. As the United States began military action this weekend against terrorist and Taliban defense sites in Afghanistan, the military air dropped tens of thousands of humanitarian assistance packages for the Afghan victims of this humanitarian crisis. Mr. Chairman, the United States has played its role in helping ease the suffering of the Afghan people.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.N. predicted that the situation will deteriorate even further. The U.N. anticipates 5–7 million people will be at risk of famine, and that there will be further large scale displacements of Afghans. Once again, we need to be clear. The blame for this lies squarely on the Taliban. Their failure to comply with the international community's demands—to hand over Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, to close down the terrorist training camps, and to release the foreign aid workers—has resulted in further suffering for the Afghan people. They have continually obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance by U.N. and other international agencies. The Taliban and the foreign terrorists they harbor bear responsibility for the political decay, economic devastation, and international isolation of what was once a proud, tolerant, and fiercely independent land.

Immediate U.S. humanitarian efforts have been directed at getting as much humanitarian assistance as possible into Afghanistan before the onset of winter. AID Director Natsios will elaborate on our efforts and those of the World Food Program to feed the Afghan people. We are also preparing for the possible flow of refugees into neighboring countries. Acting Assistant Secretary Kreczko will elaborate on the refugee situation. There are already over 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. The U.N. estimates there will be hundreds of thousands more as a result of the current tensions. Most of these refugees are expected to come to Pakistan. We also expect smaller movement to Iran and other Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan. To minimize displacement of people we will provide assistance inside Afghanistan to the extent possible. However, we are also urging all neighboring countries to allow entry to fleeing refugees.

Let me note that Pakistan has been a generous country of first asylum for millions of Afghans since 1979. We acknowledge that Pakistan has borne a heavy social and economic cost for its generosity. It has legitimate political and security concerns as a result of large scale refugee inflows. Yet, Pakistan has given its unconditional cooperation to the international community in combating terrorism. We will work with Pakistan and U.N. agencies to help Pakistan shoulder the economic and social costs of the current crisis. We have already lifted many of the sanctions, and are now assembling a package of economic assistance for Pakistan. Iran, too, has also been traditional host to many Afghan refugees. We will work through UN agencies and others to make sure that resources are available for Afghans in Iran.

President Bush has taken the lead in responding to the Afghan humanitarian crisis, but other countries are also pledging to do their share. The UN has estimated that \$584 million will be required to meet humanitarian needs over the next six months. This past weekend in Geneva, the United States and major donor countries pledged more than \$600 million in response to the humanitarian crises.

Finally, let me refer to President Bush's radio address this weekend. He raised the prospects of a future reconstruction and development package for Afghanistan. We are beginning discussions with other potential donors, international financial institutions, and the U.N. to examine what the reconstruction needs will be for a future Afghanistan. We hope the internal situation in Afghanistan will stabilize so we can move forward on such a program.

Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you very much, Ms. Rocca, and also Chairman Biden mentioned our appreciation for the ways in which Secretary of State Powell has focused on this question, including the whole issue of food relief for people and the humanitarian crisis. Please do convey our thanks to the Secretary for his fine leadership.

Mr. Kreczko.

**STATEMENT OF MR. ALAN KRECZKO, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. KRECZKO. Thank you, Senator. I will just say a few words on the refugee front.

When the President announced his \$320 million humanitarian initiative, he stressed that it would be available to meet the needs of Afghans inside Afghanistan and also for those who have to flee to neighboring countries. As Mr. Natsios explained, our most immediate current humanitarian priority is trying to provide assistance inside Afghanistan, but we are also, as a second priority, trying to prepare for potential refugee flows to neighboring countries, and in doing that, we have to take into account the context and acknowledge that Pakistan and Iran have been very generous hosts to millions of Afghan refugees for years.

There are some 3 million Afghan refugees in neighboring countries with Pakistan hosting 2 million and Iran a million and a half. As Christina noted, the U.N. high commissioner for refugees has estimated that there could be an additional 1.5 million Afghans seeking to enter neighboring countries in the current crisis. Their estimate is that roughly 1 million of those could seek to go to Pakistan, 400,000 to Iran, and 50,000 each to Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

I need to stress that these are planning figures. At this time, the actual flow of refugees is quite small. UNHCR estimates that between 20,000 and 30,000 refugees have entered Pakistan in the past several weeks, and there have not been any significant new movements to Iran or the other bordering countries. Future flows will be affected by a number of factors, including whether the Taliban continues to limit the ability of people to leave Afghanistan, how bordering states view arriving refugees, how much relief we can get in to Afghanistan, and the course of how the military activity unfolds.

As an official matter, all of Afghanistan's neighbors have closed their borders to refugee flows. However, as a practical matter, both Iran and Pakistan are working with UNHCR to plan for refugee flows, including through the prepositioning of supplies and the identification and preparation of camp sites. Particularly given the large number of refugees that these countries already host, the international community needs to be in a position to assure Iran and Pakistan that it will absorb the economic costs if there are additional refugee flows. President Bush's \$320 million initiative puts us in a strong position to do so.

And I want to just say a word with respect to Senator Biden's stressing the fact that we need an international humanitarian response that mirrors the military response.

This past weekend, the U.N. convened in Geneva a meeting of donors, as well as Iran and Pakistan, to discuss the Afghan humanitarian situation. The meeting strongly endorsed the view that we should do everything possible to get assistance into Afghanistan and also endorsed contingency planning for refugee flows.

Senator Biden noted that the U.N. has commented that \$580 million will be needed to address refugee and humanitarian needs over the winter. Overall, the U.N. announced today that they have pledged of \$730 million of humanitarian assistance with over 25 countries responding, so I think the international humanitarian response has been strong, and hopefully we will have the resources needed to address the humanitarian situation.

Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Alan Kreczko follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY ALAN KRECZKO

President Bush has provided firm leadership in the international campaign to eradicate terrorism worldwide. A key part of his efforts is directed at both the immediate and the longer-term problems plaguing the people of Afghanistan, and on this front, too, the United States is providing leadership.

Compassion is an integral component of the President's foreign policy, and it motivates America, even in these trying times, to lead the international humanitarian relief effort for those most vulnerable. As the President has asserted, "We have no compassion for terrorists, or for any state that sponsors them. But we do have great compassion for the millions around the world who are victims of hate and oppression including those in Afghanistan. We are friends of the Afghan people. We have an opportunity to make sure the world is a better place for generations to come."

The President announced last week a \$320 million initiative to provide additional humanitarian assistance for Afghans—for both those inside Afghanistan and for those who flee to neighboring countries. The United States has consistently been the largest donor to international humanitarian efforts. With vital help from a number of countries around the world, our goal is to alleviate the suffering that Afghans have endured for more than two decades, as a result of war, severe drought, and the brutal, repressive rule of the Taliban regime.

The United States believes that all of Afghanistan's neighbors should be prepared to accept new Afghan refugees as needed, and that the international community must be prepared to shoulder the economic costs incurred by the flight of desperate Afghan people.

Some 3 million Afghan refugees already reside in neighboring countries. The bulk of those are in Pakistan and Iran; about 2 million in Pakistan and some 1.5 million in Iran. As with its contributions to relief efforts overall, the United States has consistently been the largest donor to support those refugees. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the remarkable generosity of the neighboring countries in providing relief and refuge to so many Afghans for nearly two decades.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has estimated that as many as 1.5 million additional Afghans could seek to enter neighboring countries as a result of the current situation. It estimates that, of these, roughly 1 million Afghans could seek to enter Pakistan; 400,000, Iran; 50,000, Tajikistan, and 50,000, Turkmenistan. I need to stress that these are planning figures. At this time, the actual flow of new refugees is relatively small. UNHCR estimates that 20–30,000 refugees have entered Pakistan in the past two weeks, and has not reported any new refugee movements into Iran. Future flows will be affected by a number of factors, including whether the Taliban continues to limit the ability of people to leave Afghanistan, how bordering states view arriving refugees, how much relief can be delivered into and distributed within Afghanistan, and, of course, how the military activity unfolds—not just against the terrorist networks but between the Northern Alliance forces and the Taliban.

As an official matter, all of Afghanistan's neighbors have closed their borders to refugee flows. However, both Pakistan and Iran are working with UNHCR to plan for refugee flows, including through the prepositioning of supplies, and campsite identification and preparation. Particularly given the large numbers of refugees they already host, the international community needs to assure Pakistan and Iran, and

other neighboring countries, that the international community will help shoulder the economic costs incurred in providing assistance and protection.

This past weekend, the UN convened in Geneva a meeting of major donors, as well as Iran and Pakistan, to discuss the Afghan humanitarian situation. Attendees of this meeting expressed high praise to President Bush for his humanitarian initiative. The meeting strongly endorsed the view that we should make maximum efforts to provide assistance inside Afghanistan, so that people are not forced to leave in search of assistance. The meeting also endorsed contingency planning for refugee flows, and provided assurances to Pakistan and Iran of burden sharing to care for all new arrivals from Afghanistan. Overall, the donors pledged \$608 million of humanitarian response, of which President Bush's announcement of \$320 million represents over half.

The unambiguous message of the meeting was support for the Afghan people. That certainly represents the attitude and endeavors of the United States as well. We are not at war with the innocent people of Afghanistan, and we are doing all we can to ameliorate the conditions under which they have long been suffering. Our campaign against international terrorism is multi-faceted, comprising political, military, economic, and humanitarian aspects. The President's announcement last Thursday and our continuing efforts to assist the Afghan people demonstrate that our words are true harbingers of our actions.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you so much. I think if it is okay with my colleagues, we will each go five, and then we will do follow-up questions if we need to.

Let me ask you, first of all, Mr. Natsios, to go to Senator Biden's—he wanted to correct himself. He had initially talked about 350,000 daily drops, and then he said actually that it would be 37,000 to 39,000 now. With these figures, each HDR could be two meals if the people want to divide it up, but even—but there are two questions I want to ask you.

There are many who are saying that few of the HDRs actually reach their targets, number one, and even if every packet reached its target, this would serve less than 1 percent of the Afghans who are now at risk of starvation. And I wonder—I suppose what we would say is, this is just but a start. And I wonder if you could respond to this.

Mr. NATSIOS. Sure. This, by the way—I brought it with me, just because people are wondering what it looks like.

This is a humanitarian ration. There have been some media reports that the U.S. military is dropping soldiers' rations, military. We are not doing that. This was designed in mid-1990s, specifically for internally displaced people, refugees and people who are hungry, for diets that are appropriate for people in the developing world.

It does not have the level of fat content we have in a military ration. I used to have to eat them as a soldier. I can tell you, these are actually better than the military rations, but that is a matter of opinion. I had to taste these in the mid-'90s when they were developing them.

These are dropped in large packages. The packages break apart, and then these sort of—they are called flutters, because they flutter to the ground, and they say on them that they are a gift of the American people. There is also a picture on them, because a lot of people don't read any language, let alone their own. It has a picture of a person eating, so they can see that this is something to eat.

In terms of the actual drops, it is about 35,000 to 36,000 of these are dropped a day, and we are up to about 111,000 as of today, as of a couple of hours ago. I checked what the number was this after-

noon, and that will increase as the days move on. We use two standards in helping the military target where they would be dropped, and AID helped them do that, based on our data from the ground.

One is since in a month the snows will begin in the Hindu Kush, that we wanted to send these packages to areas that were inaccessible by ground, either in remote areas or in the Hindu Kush, so inaccessibility by ground transport is the first condition, and the second condition is extreme nutritional distress.

You noticed this map. By the way, you may note that you have this chart and that chart, and they are different. That is from May; that is the drought in May. This is the drought as of today. You can see things have deteriorated substantially since May of this year, but you can tell from this map, in the dark green areas, where the areas of the most severe nutritional distress, because the drought was most severe. Most Afghans are, in fact, farmers or herders, and so that is how we target this.

This is a very small portion. It is one—when it is finished—and I am not going to tell you when it is going to finish, because that compromises what we are doing or specifically where it is happening. The air drops are one-half percent to a percent of what we require totally for the whole country. The great bulk of food in any famine is always delivered on the ground, in this case by trucks mostly. In some areas of the mountains, we will deliver it by donkey.

Senator WELLSTONE. Sir, your point is that this is just but a small part.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is a small point.

Senator WELLSTONE. Let me ask you one other quick thing about the air drop. There has been—I want this to be kind of a rigorous hearing, so I put questions to you that are from a critical perspective. There has been, as you know, some criticism that actually the air drop, the military's air drops, are potentially harmful. There are NGOs—the NGOs that have been working on the ground in Afghanistan for decades have argued, some have, that combining the military and the humanitarian agendas basically endanger their independent and impartial work on the ground. And I wonder how you respond to this criticism. I have heard this; I have seen some of it expressed. I wanted to get your reaction.

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, the first thing I would say is that while our main purpose in any humanitarian relief operation under any circumstances is to save people's lives, the fact of the matter is all food that we distribute in a famine in a highly complex political and military situation has political statements that are made by it. When you feed people in a conflict like this, you are making a statement that the Afghan people are not our enemies.

Now, that is not the primary purpose of it, but it is the reason—you know, it is the secondary message that is being sent. I don't think that is bad. I think it is good. We don't want the great bulk of Afghans to be involved in this conflict. We want it to be directed to the people who are responsible. The Afghan people never elected the Taliban.

Sixty percent of the Afghan people belong to tribes that regard the Taliban as an occupation force, 60 percent of the population of the country.

The State Department did a poll this summer among the Pushtu population, which is the ethnic base of the Taliban.

Seventy-five percent of the Pushtu people do not want Taliban running even any of the country, so they have a very small base of support in the country, and we want to send a message that that is fine.

Senator WELLSTONE. You don't think—I will come back to the food later, but you don't—I mean, I always put a lot of emphasis on what NGOs tell me. I have always had such admiration for their work. You don't think this is endangering their own independence?

Mr. NATSIOS. No. Number one, we are not distributing these through NGOs. They are through military air drops. It is not a normal ration that is distributed, so it is a very different kind of ration that is being distributed. I have to say I don't see any downside in any way to—we are not asking the NGOs to compromise their neutrality at all.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you. I just want you to know that I believe it is very important that the people know that food is coming from us and from our allies in this fight against terrorism, because I think that is essential. And as my friend Ellie Smeal taught me and will teach us all later, the life of a lot of the Afghan people is that they bury their radios and televisions, because they are really not allowed to pick up anything, and a lot of them may not know anything except what the Taliban are telling them, so the fact that they can see this is from us, I think, is important.

But Senator Wellstone certainly has pointed something out. This is a very complicated situation here, and what I want to ask anyone who is competent to answer it: From what I know about the area, how do you make sure that this food, whether it is on the ground or coming from the air, is going to the right people? Are the Taliban in the refugee camps?

Is there any control over that, or are they getting the food drops? And I read somewhere they were, and they were burning it. I don't know if that is accurate or inaccurate.

What is it like for a family here? You say you don't want them to move, but if I was a mom over there and I knew that winter was coming and there was just a day's food dropping and maybe I could get it and maybe the Taliban would beat me to it, I think I would get out of the freezing places, and then go to the border. And then how do you deal with the fact that there are some skirmishes going on on the Pakistani border, either with the Taliban themselves, or with Taliban sympathizers?

I am just trying to picture in my mind: Where do these people go? Where do they go to get this food for their family, to be left in peace? If you had the chance to answer that question for someone who is looking for an answer, what would it be?

Mr. NATSIOS. The first is that people leave for a complex set of reasons, and when you have a civil war and a famine at the same time, it is difficult. Some people leave for both security reasons and

for nutritional reasons, because they leave out of coping mechanisms. The reason people die in famines is that food prices go up dramatically, and their coping capacities collapse. They have no assets left to sell; they have no animals left to sell or to eat. They don't have remittances for whatever reason. They are in a remote area; their crops have failed.

Senator BOXER. Okay. So let's say that all happens.

Mr. NATSIOS. Right.

Senator BOXER. Where would you advise them to go?

Mr. NATSIOS. Well, we are trying to get people to stay, because the options are not very good if they move. The reality is that the neighboring—

Senator BOXER. That is an interesting thing that you just said, but it is, I think, an honest answer.

Mr. NATSIOS [continuing]. Yes. The reality is that we have had experience for two decades in famines. If people move, their incidence, their risk of dying dramatically increases. Alex de Walt wrote a book called, *Famines that Kill*. It is about the Sudanese famine in 1985. And what he found is that one of the major reasons people were dying was not because of hunger, but because they were severely malnourished, and when they got to the camps, they are displaced. And they are so close together, the sanitary conditions are so bad, they were dying from disease.

In fact, most people actually never starve to death. They die of communicable disease before they actually starve to death, because their bodies, their immune systems have been weakened from the hunger. So we don't want them to leave for health reasons, nutritional reasons, and survival reasons.

Senator BOXER. That is really an important point. Is there truth to what Senator Dodd said? I had read it also, about ebola.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is not called ebola, but it is similar.

It causes severe internal bleeding, and there appears to be an outbreak in one of the areas. Although we are investigating that now, it is not on a massive scale, but there are some right along the Pakistani border, I think, in the northern area.

Senator BOXER. Would you keep our subcommittees informed on that front?

Mr. NATSIOS. We certainly will. Let me answer the question, Senator, that you asked, though, about targeting.

How do we know where the food goes? It is not just that the World Food Program does a large-scale logistics. They move the food in large tonnages inside the country. There is now 50,000 tons of food inside Pakistan destined for Afghanistan. 65,000 tons were in high seas from the United States, and we just ordered two weeks ago another 100,000 tons.

That was actually—the decision was made in June, long before September 11, so over 200,000 tons is either in country or on the way. I might add 85 percent of the food distributed in Afghanistan last year was from the United States, 85 percent, and it will be that high this year as well, and that is fine.

How do we distribute it once it gets inside the country?

WFP then gives it to the private voluntary organizations, and they have networks. Some of them have been around 20 or 30 years. They know who is in all the communities. They have lists

of people. Some of them have Afghan staffs of 1,000 to 2,000 people on their staffs for one NGO that distributes the food from lists based on targeting, based on their income levels and the resources and hunger levels.

If they are malnourished, if they are in displaced camps or refugee camps, and they don't have any alternative way of feeding themselves, then UNHCR would—I will let Alan talk about that, but there is a way of targeting that the NGOs and U.N. agencies use that ensures that the food goes to the right people. And by the way, that has continued even now, with all of what is going on, because that is still in place within Afghanistan.

Senator BOXER. I was just going to say—and I don't need another round, but other challenges, to make sure those good people don't get hurt. We lost some U.N. volunteers, so this is another horrific challenge for us against this tough situation, this dual-track situation.

Mr. NATSIOS. What we did the week after the catastrophe in the United States is we knew privately there was going to be a problem in Afghanistan, because the reports were that bin Laden and al-Qaida was involved in this. We told—and there was—there actually had been a withdrawal of humanitarian troops, NGO workers, prior to this, because of the arrest of those eight workers. This departure of expatriates took place before September 11, I might add.

It accelerated after September 11, and the instruction we sent downstairs to OFDA and Food for Peace and the AID network within the U.S. Government is, Continue to pay the Afghan staff, because we do not want them leaving their post. We want them to stay, to the extent they are physically staff, but we don't want them to stop the salaries. So we told the NGOs, Please, even though you can't do your program immediately in some areas, continue to pay the staff, so these very talented, very dedicated Afghans stay in place, because we are going to rely on them to help reconstruct the country at some point.

Senator WELLSTONE. Senator Dodd.

Senator DODD. Thanks. Let me ask two or three quick questions, because the time frame is small. One, I noticed major riots at least recently in Quetta, if that is the correct pronunciation, the Pakistan community in the southwest. That shows a tremendous increase in the number of refugees in the last 25 days, and 20,000 people have come in to that one area, and I am curious as to whether or not you have any information that a lot of the anti-U.S. rallies may be by Taliban supporters who have come in to destabilize in Pakistan, number one.

And, number two, where is the source of heat or fuel that the Afghan population will get in the winter months? What is that situation?

Whether or not you have any information as to whether or not the Taliban themselves are interfering with any of the efforts of people to get these food supplies, and I guess it is early.

But last I am just curious. I said almost facetiously this committee should have been conducted by the Western Hemisphere subcommittee. This food package is in Spanish and in English, and I presume we have it—it is being dropped in the Afghan tongue. Is this the language on the package?

Mr. NATSIOS. No. They didn't have time to print those, Senator, so that is what was dropped.

Senator DODD. That is hard for—you know, English and Spanish—

Mr. NATSIOS. Most of the people who receive this cannot read, Senator. About two-thirds of the population does not read, and the poorest people are the ones who are most likely to die, and they are the least educated.

Senator DODD. I would rather have you drop it. I don't care, but I hope at some point we get creative on how we communicate.

Mr. NATSIOS. On the bags of wheat we are sending in, of which there will be hundreds of thousands, we had it printed in Hazarah and Kushnu, the two—Pushtu and Dari, the two principal languages, on the bags with a giant American flag.

And what it says is, Gift of the American people. And so that is being printed by the United States Department of Agriculture, which does all the shipping of this food, in the big wheat bags, which will get to a huge number of people, so—

Senator DODD. There is no way you can put anything on this, a quick stamp, to say it is safe?

Mr. NATSIOS. It takes a while to produce that, and September 11 is just a few weeks ago.

Senator DODD. I understand, but you understand the point. How could we have this stuff out—and I realize only 30 percent of the population is literate, but presumably there would be people around who could help people read something.

Mr. NATSIOS. The big thing that makes people know it is the American flag on it, where it came from, and the picture.

But in the bags, they will be in the local languages. Those are being printed right now as we speak.

Senator DODD. And the food supplies that are coming from the international community, I would like to see obviously that we get some credit here. It might also be important to know that food supplies are coming from other nations, including other Arabic countries.

Mr. NATSIOS. Every country that is sending food puts their flag and their bona fides on the bag.

Senator DODD. An important message is that our efforts are being joined by the responsible moderate Arab world, and that is—the U.S. flag, it seems to me, is critically important.

Anyway, if you could respond to the other two or three questions.

Mr. NATSIOS. You asked the question on fuel. There are three ways.

Senator DODD. And the mining, too, whether we have had any cooperation on the demining efforts, whether we are dropping these food supplies in areas where we know there is a proliferation of mines that we helped plant.

Mr. NATSIOS. In terms of the fuel, there are three ways in which Afghans heat their homes. One is through wood. the second is charcoal, and third, if the cattle herds were still in good shape, the manure is dried, and they use that principally in the highlands and in the cattle-growing areas.

However, a lot of the cattle have died, and so they are relying more and more on wood unfortunately. The manure is much more

sustainable obviously, but in this case, we can't use that, because many of the animals have died. So that is the way they cook their food and that is the way they heat their homes in the wintertime.

In terms of demining, we are very much aware of this, and that was taken into account during the plotting of where these drops are made. The Taliban may well have gotten one or two of these things, but I have got to tell you, they were not dropped in areas that have much Taliban presence, and that was just a coincidence. The areas that we dropped them in were, in fact, based on the two standards I mentioned earlier, so I don't think they are getting them.

Senator DODD. How much specific information do we have about where the mines are?

Mr. NATSIOS. There was a large-scale NGO/U.N. demining effort that has been going on since the end of the Soviet period, and they have maps of the areas. There are, I think, two or three big NGOs that do nothing but demining and contract firms, and so there is a lot of data. I have not personally seen it all, but the staffs have, and there are discussions within DOD with these people on this issue, because it has been a concern and we don't want to drop these in mined areas. Obviously that would be terrible if we did that.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you.

Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Did the Senator from Connecticut need to have more time? I would certainly yield to him.

Senator DODD. No.

Senator WELLSTONE. He is being very good. He knows we have another panel.

Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you as well. Thank you.

Last week, our committee went and had a wonderful exchange of ideas with the Secretary of State. Secretary Rocca was there, and one of the things that I shared was that I am given to believe that we have had a tremendous success with our food distribution in North Korea, that the fact that the food is distributed in sacks that the people know that it came from the United States, that they use the sacks for other things, and if we are about trying to win friends and the hearts and minds of the people, that that is an important lesson for us to learn. So in addition to dropping the little packets like this, you mentioned sacks of food. Tell us about that, and what will the sacks say on them.

Mr. NATSIOS. I have to tell you, I was involved with an NGO when we did that in North—when I say, we, when the United States did it, and I have done some writing on the North Korean famine, and I interviewed refugees up on the Chinese border with North Korea, and I interviewed one who said he saw the sacks, and he said, Our Government didn't tell us, but it said—for the first time—we had never put in local language until the North Korean time. We put it in Korean, Gift of the people of the United States, with a flag.

We have always done it previously in English. This is the first time we did it. And the reason we did it in Afghanistan is because

it was so divisive in North Korea and so successful. I will tell you a story. The first food shipment that went out to Chongjin, which is up in the northeast region in North Korea, in the famine—no food had been delivered for two-and-a-half years by the central government. There was mass starvation.

The first ship that came into the harbor was an American ship. The North Korean military required the U.S. Government to take the flag down, because they didn't want riots in the streets. They took the flag down, because they couldn't deliver the food otherwise, but I talked to several WFP logisticians. They said everybody in the city knew where it came from, because it said it on the bag, and they said one of the refugees said to me, We now know who our real enemies are.

We were taught all along it was the United States; it is not the United States; it is our own government. That is what the refugee told me.

That one bag he saw said a lot of things to him. the only food that got in there in two-and-a-half years was from the United States. It is a very powerful message.

Senator NELSON. And so from that success—and it is my understanding that they not only get the value of the food, but they use the sacks for things.

Mr. NATSIOS. Absolutely, they do.

Senator NELSON. So what are we going to do in addition to those little packages?

Mr. NATSIOS. All of the sacks that go in—and we expect between 300,000 and 400,000 tons of food to be delivered from the United States to Afghanistan in this current fiscal year, this period. The bags will say on it in the two principal languages, Pushtu and Dari, Gift of the American people, and there will be a flag, an American flag, on the bags, and that is how the food will be distributed. They are bags about this big. (Indicating.)

Senator NELSON. It is 110-pound sack generally.

Mr. NATSIOS. Fifty kilos, 110. You are right.

Senator NELSON. All right. Now, you need to know what I just saw last Friday in the Port of Pensacola. I went there for a different reason. I went there on port security. I was gratified when I saw a whole warehouse of 110-pound sacks of flour going to Tajikistan, but the sacks just had USA in red, white and blue. They don't read, USA, so they need to say in the native language so we are getting the credit for it.

Mr. NATSIOS. Senator, I learned some lessons from the North Korean famine. We are beginning to enforce that, and we are going to continue to do that.

Senator DODD. Soon. You have got to do this quickly. That is important.

Mr. NATSIOS. We gave this order three weeks ago, Senator, in terms of the printing of the bags.

Senator DODD. This doesn't take much.

Mr. NATSIOS. We would have brought a copy of the North Korean bag so you could see it.

Senator NELSON. Other than red, white, and blue, there was no flag; there was nothing except, USA. And for somebody who doesn't read English, they wouldn't have any idea where it came from.

Mr. NATSIOS. There are other means by which we will be making known how large the aid program is, who is distributing the aid, what countries are involved, where the food is moving to, because we believe for humanitarian purposes, it is important that the Afghan people know when shipments are coming in, what their ration is they are going to get, and it will become clear that is not the Taliban that is feeding them. The Afghan people already know that. The Afghan—it is not even a government; it is a movement. We shouldn't even call it a regime; it is just a movement.

They have not been feeding the people. Last summer, I said—before September, What is bin Laden doing. He is supposed to love the Afghan people so much. You know what the NGOs told me? Absolutely nothing. The Taliban is doing nothing.

Senator WELLSTONE. I am going to be abrupt and try to finish this up, because I am worried about that we won't give the other panelists a chance.

Mr. NATSIOS. I apologize.

Senator WELLSTONE. No, no. You have done fine work.

Senator NELSON. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure that somebody is going to check this out. Why was a whole warehouse, of which I am just so grateful that it is going to Tajikistan, but with this phenomenal success that we have had in North Korea, you would think that that would be one of the first things that we would think of when we are sending sacks of flour to Tajikistan.

Mr. NATSIOS. Those particular sacks are for—there is a drought and a famine—not a famine but a severe food emergency in Tajikistan now. Those actually weren't for Afghanistan. They were for another problem, but you are right on your point. I take it well.

Senator DODD. Korea was the first country?

Mr. NATSIOS. That I am aware of.

Senator DODD. What genius has thought about this? I am stunned to hear that. This is not terribly difficult, and it is—

Senator NELSON. And it is just so incredibly great for our country that here we have got a Communist dictator that is constantly trying to tell the people of North Korea how bad we are, and here the people are just so grateful to America as a result of what they are getting.

Senator WELLSTONE. The Senator from the Florida and the Senator from Connecticut have been heard.

[General laughter.]

Senator NELSON. I want to know, who are we going to hear from and when are we going to hear.

Senator DODD. You ought to drop some of those in Cuba.

[General laughter.]

Senator WELLSTONE. Believe me, there will be follow-up from the Senator from Florida. We thank all three of you.

Let me call the next panel up. Mr. Nicolas de Torrente, executive director of Doctors Without Borders; Mr. Ken Bacon, president of Refugees International; and Eleanor Smeal, president, Feminist Majority. And I would ask unanimous consent that Senator Enzi's statement go in the record, and a statement from Human Rights Watch be included in the record as well.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Michael B. Enzi follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MICHAEL B. ENZI

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my support for President Bush and the actions he has taken in Afghanistan, especially in the area of humanitarian aid. As we are all too aware, the people of Afghanistan have suffered over two decades of turmoil, nearly four years of drought, and the oppressive and illegitimate rule of the Taliban regime. I am pleased that the United States has been a staunch supporter of the Afghan people and the largest contributor of humanitarian aid. In fact, since 1979 the United States has contributed more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

I believe President Bush is continuing our strong support with his proposal to contribute an additional \$320 million in humanitarian assistance. The aid is on its way and the United States has already begun to airlift food. In just two airdrops, nearly 75,000 daily rations were distributed to various locations in Afghanistan. Two days ago World Food Program convoys carrying 1,000 tons of wheat left Pakistan and a convoy carrying 100 tons of wheat recently left Iran. While there are millions more in need of food, this is just the beginning. The United States currently has over 165,000 tons of wheat on ships headed for the region. We are working with neighboring countries to distribute food within Afghanistan. Although international relief workers are no longer in the country, local workers are continuing the effort to distribute food and medicine. Winter, however, is quickly approaching and the need for immediate assistance for the Afghan people is as crucial as ever. The mountainous country with little remaining infrastructure leaves too many communities stranded for the long winter months.

It is important to reiterate, we are not fighting the Afghan people, we are fighting terrorism. While we oppose the terrorists within Afghanistan, we must proceed with our aid efforts throughout the country. I am confident that President Bush and his Administration will continue to support and aid the people of Afghanistan as we fight terrorism.

[The prepared statement of Human Rights Watch follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

## AFGHANISTAN AND REFUGEES: NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Twenty years of civil war, political turmoil, continuing human rights violations and recent drought have already displaced more than five million of Afghanistan's population. Some four million refugees are displaced in neighboring countries and across the world, while another one million people are internally displaced within Afghanistan. Before September 11, severe drought had brought the country to the verge of famine and existing Taliban restrictions on relief agencies had severely hampered the delivery of assistance and civilian access to basic services.

Now that U.S. and British air strikes have begun, the humanitarian situation is even more urgent. Unfortunately, the recent strikes killed four workers involved in demining operations inside Afghanistan, which is considered one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Landmines are concentrated in the border regions to which refugees are likely to flee.

If the situation was bad for Afghan civilians, displaced persons, and refugees before the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington D.C., it only worsened in the three weeks afterwards. Conditions inside Afghanistan as of early October have deteriorated dramatically and aid agencies are warning of a humanitarian disaster of epic proportions.

The withdrawal of all international relief agency staff after the September 11 attacks when the Taliban declared that it could no longer guarantee their security has exacerbated an already dire situation. Border closures have severed the supply of aid into Afghanistan. At the same time the Taliban are reported to have confiscated food supplies from the United Nations and relief agencies and shut down U.N. communication networks. Many relief agencies report that they have been unable to contact their local staff since the September 11 attacks and thus information about conditions inside the country is scant. The World Food Program (WFP) warned shortly after the attacks that food supplies inside the country could only last two to three weeks. Limited food deliveries were resumed to the borders of northern and western Afghanistan at the end of September, but as of October 8, WFP announced that all food deliveries inside and outside the borders of Afghanistan had been stopped in response to the U.S. military air strikes. Airdrops by the U.S. military of food and medical supplies have been met with skepticism by aid agencies outside the U.N. system, because of the lack of in-country staff to deliver the supplies and to properly administer medicines to needy populations.

After the September 11 attacks, fear of retaliatory military action and forced conscription by the Taliban, politically motivated attacks by the Taliban against particular ethnic groups believed to be sympathetic to the opposition, as well as the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan have caused tens of thousands of Afghans to flee, most of them towards Pakistan.

All six countries neighboring Afghanistan, including Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China, officially closed their borders to refugees both on security grounds and citing an inability to economically provide for more refugees. Like Pakistan and Iran, Tajikistan's borders had been closed to Afghan refugees for the past year. Pakistan's actions were reportedly in direct response to a request from the U.S. to strengthen security in an effort to apprehend those responsible for the U.S. attacks. Although tens of thousands of refugees have been able to cross into Pakistan, thousands more—most of them women and children—have been trapped at the border with no shelter, food, water, or medical care. UNHCR has reported that several women have given birth while waiting to cross the border into Afghanistan.

While countries in the region do face legitimate security concerns at this time, measures must be found to address these concerns without denying refuge to those fleeing civil conflict, human rights violations, the fear of military threats and conscription, and the looming humanitarian crisis inside Afghanistan.

Host and donor governments, in collaboration with the United Nations, should keep all borders open to fleeing refugees in line with neighboring countries' international obligations, while simultaneously developing a coordinated strategy to effectively identify and separate militants and armed elements from civilian refugees.

#### *Pakistan*

Pakistan is host to some two million Afghan refugees, and despite having officially closed its borders, many more Afghans are crossing into Pakistan each day. Pakistan's border with Afghanistan is 1,560 miles long, making it difficult to control. The current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and impending U.S. military action has led to an increased influx of refugees, particularly at the Chanam border crossing near Quetta in Balochistan province. Approximately 15,000 refugees have reached the Chanam border; attempts to prevent thousands more Afghans from crossing have led to clashes between border guards and refugees. Concerned about deteriorating humanitarian and security conditions for refugees trapped at the Chanam border crossing, UNHCR was negotiating with the Pakistan authorities to allow the refugees entry into Pakistan. In a report on October 1, however, UNHCR stated that thousands of the refugees had left the border area, supposedly retreating back into Afghanistan and seeking other ways into Pakistan. Since then, each day several hundred refugees arrive in Pakistan via mountain roads, but as of October 8, Pakistan continues to officially refuse to re-open its borders. The Taliban have also established checkpoints along routes to Pakistan to prevent those without passports and visas from leaving the country.

UNHCR is preparing to provide relief to those fleeing the country and the Pakistan government has stated that it will provide assistance to those refugees who manage to enter the country. Some 100 new refugee sites have been identified by the Pakistan authorities in the North West Frontier Province, which could accommodate up to one million people. The sites are located in what are known as Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas—largely lawless territories close to the Afghanistan border. The new sites lack adequate water supply and infrastructure and Human Rights Watch is concerned by reports that refugees may be held under detention-like conditions. Location of refugee camps in these areas could seriously endanger the well-being, safety and security of the refugees. International standards stipulate that refugee camps should be located at a safe distance from international borders to avoid cross-border attacks or military incursions and that refugees should not be held in detention-like conditions. In addition, all sites currently identified lack adequate water, an issue that promises to plague internally displaced and refugee populations throughout the region. On October 8, UNHCR offices were stoned and personnel were unable to travel to border regions because of demonstrations in Quetta and Peshawar. The UNICEF office in Quetta was burned by protesters, as were the offices of two NGOs working with refugees located in the northwest border regions.

#### *Iran*

Iran's frontier with Afghanistan is 560 miles long. In the wake of proposed U.S. military action in Afghanistan, Iran has closed its border expecting large numbers of Afghan refugees to attempt to cross. Iran has indicated that it wishes to provide humanitarian assistance only inside Afghanistan with the consent of the Taliban.

To this end, seven refugee camps have been proposed for the border region between Afghanistan and Iran, but on Afghan soil. These camps will be designed to hold a maximum of 200,000 refugees between them. Iranian newspapers have reported that the interior ministry called upon Iranian relief organizations to provide emergency aid, although relief workers have so far reported that few refugees have reached the Iranian border. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the Iranian Red Crescent moved tons of relief items to the border in preparation for possible new arrivals. So far, Iran has not responded to calls from UNHCR or international NGOs to officially reopen its borders, although reportedly small numbers of refugees are being allowed to cross. Recent reports indicate that hundreds of Afghans seeking refuge from the military air strikes were unable to cross into Iran because of border closures. Iran has sent extra troops into the eastern border region to maintain security and keep the borders closed.

#### *Tajikistan*

Recovering from its own 1992–1997 civil war, the situation in Tajikistan is still unstable. The war, which caused massive internal displacement, has compounded the country's problems. Tajikistan's frontier with Afghanistan has been closed since September 2000. The Tajikistan government, unable to adequately defend the border itself has been relying on thousands of Russian Federal border guards to guard its frontiers.

There are currently over 10,000 internally displaced Afghans on islands in the Pyanj River, waiting for an opportunity to cross into Tajikistan, some of whom receive assistance from aid agencies. UNHCR has estimated that as many as 50,000 Afghans in neighboring provinces close to the border may also leave their homes should the current crisis escalate. Other estimates put this figure as high as 120,000. On September 20, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, stated that the country would not be prepared to let a single refugee into the country. He cited a threat of infiltration by Islamic militants as well as serious economic problems as his major concerns.

#### *China, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan*

All three other countries have also closed their borders. China's relatively narrow border with Afghanistan is the least accessible route out of the country. Uzbekistan's frontier has been reinforced, with the government citing concerns about Islamic militancy as the justification. Turkmenistan's foreign minister indicated a willingness to work with UNHCR, although it is not clear whether this means that the border would reopen in the event of an influx of refugees.

#### *Policy Recommendations*

There is an urgent need for international cooperation to address the humanitarian crisis inside Afghanistan, to assist countries in the region to cope with large-scale refugee flows, and for western states to take their share of Afghan refugees. Countries should not use legitimate security concerns in the face of the September 11 attacks as an opportunity to close their borders or introduce legislation that further restricts the rights of all refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, or other non-citizens.

Afghanistan's neighbors should work quickly to establish procedures, in conjunction with UNHCR and donor governments, to separate armed elements from refugees. In this way they can keep their borders open and comply with their obligations under international refugee law, as well as their humanitarian obligations, while maintaining national security. Urgent steps should be taken to help these countries to cope with the potential mass influx of refugees.

Human Rights Watch makes the following recommendations.

#### To the Taliban authorities

- As a matter of urgency allow international relief and U.N. agencies full, free, and unimpeded humanitarian access to all civilians inside Afghanistan, including the internally displaced, with full security guarantees.
- Cease immediately the confiscation of humanitarian supplies from relief and U.N. agencies and restore to the extent possible full communication networks for U.N. and relief agencies.

#### To neighboring countries

- Re-open borders to refugees from Afghanistan and provide them with adequate protection.
- The deportation of Afghan refugees must cease immediately.

- As a matter of urgency and in collaboration with donor governments and United Nations agencies, develop a coordinated strategy to effectively identify and separate militants and armed elements from civilian refugees. Separation should take place inside host countries at the border and involve an international monitoring presence.
- The establishment of cross-border camps, safe havens, or humanitarian zones within Afghanistan should not be considered as an alternative to refuge in neighboring countries.
- Refugee camps should be established in safe, accessible areas in neighboring countries and located at a safe distance from international borders in accordance with international refugee protection standards. Camps should be set up in areas with adequate infrastructure and water supply and humanitarian agencies should have full, free and unimpeded access to the camps. Refugees should not be held in camps under detention-like conditions.

To governments in industrialized countries

- Continue to allow asylum seekers access to fair and efficient asylum determination procedures. Tougher immigration controls, including anti-terrorist and anti-smuggling measures, should not infringe on the rights of all asylum seekers to access fair and efficient asylum determination procedures, and should in no way undermine government's international obligations prohibiting arbitrary and indefinite detention and the return of refugees and asylum seekers to territories where their lives or freedom may be threatened.
- Urgent measures must be taken to counteract and prevent growing xenophobic and racist attacks against nationals, immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees on the basis of their ethnic origin, nationality, religious and political beliefs and backgrounds. Increased protection should be provided to these groups, and government leaders should take the lead in countering racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination.
- Immigration control measures must include procedural safeguards in conformity with international standards for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers arrested, detained, and in the process of deportation.

To donor governments

- The Bush Administration's commitment of \$320 million in immediate humanitarian aid both for refugees and the population inside Afghanistan is a good start, but clearly more is needed.
- International responsibility-sharing measures should be urgently put in place to respond to the humanitarian crisis inside Afghanistan and potential refugee flows.
- Immediate humanitarian assistance must be provided to civilians inside Afghanistan to prevent further humanitarian disaster and options for ensuring that assistance reaches those most in need, especially the internally displaced, must be urgently explored.
- Urgently provide international assistance to neighboring countries and countries in the region to cope with the potential outflow of refugees from Afghanistan.
- Governments outside the region, particularly industrialized states, should explore emergency resettlement possibilities for Afghan refugees.

Senator WELLSTONE. If I could bring the hearing to order, we have got a very important panel to hear from, and we will start with Mr. de Torrente.

**STATEMENT OF MR. NICOLAS DE TORRENTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Mr. DE TORRENTE. Thank you, Senator Wellstone. Ladies and gentlemen, I am very grateful to Senator Boxer.

Senator WELLSTONE. Mr. de Torrente, excuse me. As those of you who leave the room, if you could please keep your conversation out of the room, it would be very, very helpful to us.

Mr. DE TORRENTE. I am very grateful to you, Senator Boxer and Senator Wellstone, for convening this important hearing today and for giving me the opportunity to present Doctors Without Borders' perspective on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Before doing so, I would first like to express the deep shock of all of MSF's staff felt around the world following the September 11 attack on the United States and extend our condolences to the friends and families of the victims here.

These deliberate attacks which indiscriminately targeted civilians were really an all-out assault on the fundamental values and principles that we as a humanitarian organization hold so dear.

Turning now to the very severe humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, I think for the sake of the short amount of time we have in front of us, it has been very well described by others before me. Suffice it to say that even before September 11, we were very concerned about the situation.

Doctors Without Borders has 70 international volunteers and over 400 Afghan staff present in all areas of the country. We are running hospitals, clinics, providing essential health care services, and responding to emergencies there.

With the epidemics and health care problems resulting from population displacement and malnutrition, through our intervention we witnessed a clear deterioration, especially in nutritional terms, which Mr. Natsios has described. We witnessed also increasing population displacement and very severe medical problems leading to malnutrition such as scurvy epidemics in the north of the country earlier this year, cholera epidemics, and other problems of the like.

Since September 11, the rising tensions and the grave uncertainty about the security situation led to the withdrawal of MSF and other international humanitarian staff. This is jeopardizing the programs that are providing a lifeline to the vulnerable Afghan population. It also makes it very difficult to know what is actually going on right now inside the country. Today our main goal is to bring our teams back up to full capacity. To do this, we require that all parties to the conflict guarantee safe and unhindered access to the Afghan civilians in need.

Up until very recently, convoys of food and medical supplies were resupplying our programs in Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, and Kabul. Our staff remains able and committed, and we are able to monitor the situation through some of them, and so although the supplies and the size of the teams are still insufficient, these programs remain important sources of medical and nutritional assistance to the Afghan population.

The main point I would like to raise today is our concern regarding the impact that military actions have on humanitarian actions inside of Afghanistan and why we at MSF feel it is so important to maintain a clear distinction between these two endeavors. The United States has stated clearly that the delivery of aid is an integral component of its comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy, and we have heard a lot about that this afternoon.

President Bush's recently announced aid package is a reflection of this approach, and it builds on the longstanding generosity of the U.S. Government and people for assistance programs toward Afghanistan. One of the key objectives of the strategy is to win over

public support in Afghanistan and elsewhere for the United States's comprehensive assault on terrorism by conveying the message that the U.S. strikes at the Taliban leadership and Osama bin Laden network, but reaches out to the Afghan civilians.

Now, clearly there is an enormous need for assistance, especially as winter approaches. However, we have a number of concerns about the blurring of lines between the current military and humanitarian actions. First of all, I would like to make a quick point about the air drops themselves. Air drops of food by the U.S. military, even if they are well-intentioned, they are not really the most effective means of meeting the enormous humanitarian needs of the Afghan people.

To be effective, air drops should include the clear identification of beneficiaries, careful monitoring of the distribution of assistance, and transparency and implementation of the operation. Our experience has taught us that delivering untargeted and unmonitored relief is generally ineffective and can even be potentially harmful. Most importantly, however, we believe that the military and humanitarian agendas and activities should be clearly separated.

Now, this is not about semantics or abstract principles, but it has really very direct implications in terms of the security of humanitarian staff and access to populations in need. The Geneva conventions define humanitarian action as neutral, independent, and impartial. This means that humanitarian actors should not take sides and should be free from political influence so that they can go after their objective single-mindedly, to impartially help people solely based on the criteria of need.

Now, if aid is not perceived to be entirely neutral and independent of political objectives, it can be claimed by one or both sides as a part of the war effort. Aid and aid workers can then become targets of war. When aid is delivered by military actors, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince armed factions on the ground of the impartial objectives of western humanitarian organizations in these very volatile and politically charged environments.

Recent attacks on U.N. offices in Quetta, Pakistan, are just one reflection of this problem, and it is not a new one. In Somalia, the confusion of roles and agendas of the political and military actors with those of the humanitarian organizations resulted in ultimately neither side being able to reach their objectives and with dramatic consequences for both.

What is really needed now is a large-scale independent humanitarian relief effort aimed at directly reaching those most in need in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. I will come back to that in a short while.

Finally, I would just turn to the situation of Afghan refugees in recent months. In addition to the approximately 4 million of refugees in neighboring countries, hundreds of thousands of Afghans have fled their country in search of security and assistance abroad. We have seen over 400,000 people moving to Iran in the last six months and some 200,000 to Pakistan over the last year or so.

Our work with a large number of these refugees has shown that fear of violation and persecution have been a key factor in this population's decision to leave the country, and many also seek to escape the ravages of the drought. Knowing the dire medical and nu-

tritional consequences of massive displacement—and, again, Mr. Natsios explained this very well—we understand why one important reason to inject food into Afghanistan may be to prevent further displacement.

But it is important to remember that these necessary aid efforts, even if they are successful, cannot provide a guarantee of protection for the civilian population. The right of the Afghans to seek safe asylum must be respected.

MSF is extremely concerned with the closing of all international borders with Afghanistan and the containment of the population that results from it. Non-refoulement, which is the right not to be forcibly returned to an insecure area, must also be upheld. Currently we have not witnessed the expected mass influx of Afghans across international borders in recent weeks.

There has been much speculation as to the reasons for this. Have Afghans abandoned the more exposed larger towns and taken shelter in the countryside? Have they been blocked along the roads? We don't know for sure, but what is certain is that borders remain officially closed with even tighter controls than before. Only those who can afford the high price of smugglers can flee, leaving the poorest and most vulnerable behind.

We are also very concerned that despite the ongoing preparations of aid agencies that are led by UNHCR and others, and including MSF, that despite these preparations, were refugees to arrive in big numbers today, they would not be adequately protected and assisted in host countries. For a number of years, despite their longstanding hospitality, Pakistan and Iran have been increasingly reluctant to accept newcomers.

New signs that have been now identified for refugee camps in Pakistan are situated in insecure and inaccessible areas very close to the border. In these locations, the safety of the refugees and of the aid workers who would try to assist them is very far from assured. Moreover, these are desolate areas where water and shade are in very scarce supply.

So to conclude, what is critical for MSF is in the midst of this conflict, that as many dimensions, the fundamental needs of protection and relief for the Afghan people are met, we would like to underline the following points:

The rights of the Afghan civilian population to safety and humanitarian assistance should be assured by all parties to the conflict by maintaining a clear distinction between military actions on the one hand and aid operations on the other. The U.S. Government will contribute to the future involvement of the independent and impartial humanitarian actors in Afghanistan.

The U.S. Government should also insist on the opening of borders of neighboring countries to Afghan refugees on a large-scale and independent humanitarian relief operation, and we have heard about it as well in some of the testimony earlier today. That should be led by international, nongovernmental organizations. It is needed inside and outside Afghanistan. This large-scale, independent effort would provide effective assistance and protection to the civilian population solely on the basis of assessed needs in an impartial. In neighboring countries, the conditions for refugees current and future must be substantially improved.

Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful for this opportunity to express our concerns today in front of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nicolas de Torrente follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NICOLAS DE TORRENTE, PH.D.

Ladies and Gentleman: I am grateful to Senator Wellstone and his staff for convening this hearing today and for giving me the opportunity to present Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)'s perspective on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

First of all, I would like to express the deep shock that all MSF staff and volunteers around the world felt following the September 11 attacks on the United States and extend our condolences to the friends and families of the victims. These deliberate attacks, which indiscriminately targeted civilians, were an all-out assault on the fundamental values and principles that we as a humanitarian organization hold so dear. We have been extremely impressed by the rescue and recovery operations in New York, and, in a modest way, were able to contribute to this effort by providing an MSF mental health team experienced in mass trauma to support New York's own excellent mental health professionals.

I would also like to take this opportunity to clarify, up front, some confusion regarding MSF's stance on the U.S. actions taken since Sunday. As a humanitarian organization, our concern with any military actions, including those undertaken by U.S. forces in Afghanistan, is with their impact on the civilian population. Our intention is also to raise concerns regarding the blurring of lines between military and aid activities—such a mixing of roles has the potential to undermine the provision of larger-scale humanitarian assistance by independent, non-governmental actors to the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan, as I would like to explain, below.

First, please allow me to briefly share with you the salient features of the severe humanitarian crisis currently facing Afghanistan.

THE SEVERE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN

MSF has been working in Afghanistan for over 20 years. In fact, I just returned from Faizabad, in the Northern Alliance-held territory, in late August. At that time, MSF had over 70 international volunteers and over 400 Afghan staff present in all areas of Afghanistan. MSF volunteers were running hospitals, clinics, providing essential health care services and responding to emergencies, particularly epidemics, and health problems resulting from population displacement and malnutrition.

Over 20 years of war and three years of uninterrupted drought have combined to force hundreds of thousands of Afghans from their homes, exposing them to increasing insecurity, disease and hunger.

Today, due to internal conflict and regional tensions, civilians are trapped within the cycle of violence, and are suffering from persecution, repression and other violations of international humanitarian law from different sides.

The drought has compounded the effects of the ongoing conflict by gradually depleting people's coping mechanisms. Our surveys show a consistent deterioration of the nutritional situation in all areas, now reaching emergency levels for millions of people (more than 10 percent of children under 5 were measured as being acutely malnourished). There have recently been outbreaks of scurvy (vitamin C deficiency) and epidemics of diseases (cholera, measles, diarrhea) that easily kill malnourished children. We are concerned that with high levels of malnutrition, these people face a long winter before there is even the chance of a new harvest.

Throughout Afghanistan, war and drought has resulted in massive displacement. In recent months, hundreds of thousands of people have been leaving their lands, homes and families out of fear or hunger or both, and fleeing to vast makeshift camps around the major cities or to neighboring countries.

For MSF, carrying out effective humanitarian action requires the constant presence of our teams on the ground so they can assess the needs of the civilians, provide assistance to the most vulnerable, and evaluate the impact of our programs on the target population. In Afghanistan, it has been difficult to gain the necessary conditions for access and appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially to women, but it has been possible. Throughout our 20 years in Afghanistan, maintaining direct contact with the population and dialogue with the different actors, as well as demonstrating focused and clear humanitarian goals has been critical to our operations. This has become more difficult in recent years for several reasons, including the increasing restrictions on NGO operations by the Taliban regime.

Since September 11, rising tensions, and grave uncertainty about the security situation led to the withdrawal of MSF and other international humanitarian staff. This is jeopardizing the programs that provide a lifeline to the vulnerable Afghan population, and also makes it difficult to really know what is happening inside the country.

Today, our main goal is to bring our teams back up to full capacity. To do this, we require that all parties to the conflict guarantee safe and unhindered access to the Afghan civilians in need. Up until the air strikes, convoys of food and medical supplies were resupplying our programs in Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat and Kabul. Our Afghan staff remains in the country, very committed and able, and we are able to monitor the situation somewhat through communication with some of them. Although the supplies and the size of the teams are currently insufficient, these programs remain important sources of medical and nutritional assistance to the Afghan population. These efforts are currently suspended due to the military operation.

A main point I would like to raise today is our concern regarding the impact that military actions have on humanitarian actions inside Afghanistan, and why we in MSF feel it is so important to maintain a clear distinction between these two endeavors. Allow me to elaborate more on this latter point.

#### CONCERNS REGARDING INTEGRATING HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS WITHIN A MILITARY STRATEGY

The U.S. has stated clearly that the delivery of aid is an integral component of its comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy. President Bush's recently announced \$320 million aid package is a reflection of this approach, building on the long-standing generosity of the U.S. government for assistance programs towards Afghanistan. One of the key objectives of this strategy is to win over public support in Afghanistan and elsewhere for the US's comprehensive assault on terrorism, by conveying the message that the U.S. strikes at the Taliban leadership and Osama bin-Laden network, but reaches out to Afghan civilians. Clearly, there is an enormous need for assistance, especially as winter approaches. However, we have a number of concerns about the blurring of lines between the current military and humanitarian actions.

First, I would like to make a quick point on the airdrops themselves. As has already been stated by administration officials, air drops of food by the U.S. military, even if well-intentioned, are not the most effective means of meeting the enormous humanitarian needs of the Afghan people. Air drops should include the clear identification of beneficiaries, careful monitoring of the distribution of assistance, and transparency in implementation of the operation. Our experience has taught us that delivering untargeted and unmonitored relief is generally ineffective and can even be potentially harmful. For instance, medicines need to be delivered through health structures and administered by qualified health staff if they are to be effective, and not risk causing more harm than good. Malnourished persons require specialized food and care. By packaging individual rations, the U.S. military's intention is to limit diversion of aid into the hands of military forces. However, this still does not ensure that the aid benefits those who need it most. Aid agencies on the ground have done extensive work to identify and target those most in need, whether they are displaced persons in camps or widow-headed household in major cities. Without independent assessments and monitoring on the ground, it will be very difficult to be convinced that airdrops have reached these people.

Most importantly, however, we believe that the military and humanitarian agendas and activities should be clearly separated. This is not about semantics or abstract principles, this has very direct implications in terms of security of humanitarian staff and access to populations in need.

The Geneva Conventions defines humanitarian action as neutral, independent and impartial. This means that humanitarian actors should not take sides and should be free from political influence so they can go after their objectives single-mindedly—to impartially help people based solely on criteria of need. If aid is not perceived to be entirely neutral and independent of political objectives it can be claimed by one or both sides as a part of the war effort. Aid and aid workers can then become targets of war.

Gaining access and providing assistance to vulnerable populations under the sway of armed factions in a politically charged climate is always very difficult. Ultimately, it rests on demonstrating that the motives for helping the civilians are purely humanitarian. By making aid delivery an essential means of reaching its political and military objectives, the U.S.-led effort could well taint those independent and impartial humanitarian actors whose programs have provided the bulk of the assistance to Afghans for many years, and whose efforts will be needed for years more.

In the aftermath of the current events, it will be increasingly difficult to convince armed factions of the impartial objectives of western humanitarian organizations in very volatile and politically charged environments. Recent attacks on UN offices in Quetta, Pakistan, are a reflection of this problem. And it is not a new one: in Somalia, the confusion of roles and agendas of the political and military actors with those of humanitarian organizations resulted in neither side being able to reach their objectives, with dramatic consequences for both.

What is needed now is a large-scale independent humanitarian relief effort aimed directly at reaching those most in need in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. This response could be provided by independent humanitarian organizations and UN agencies. All parties to the conflict, including the Taliban, must allow for the delivery of large-scale convoys of basic foodstuffs and medicines by humanitarian actors who can ensure that it is delivered to those who need it.

#### AFGHAN REFUGEES

In recent months, in addition to the approximately 4 million refugees in neighboring countries, hundreds of thousands of Afghans have fled their country in search of security and assistance abroad: over 400,000 to Iran, and some 200,000 to Pakistan. Our work with a large number of these refugees has shown that fear, violence and persecution have been a key factor in this population's decision to leave the country. Many also seek to escape the ravages of the drought.

Knowing the dire medical and nutritional consequences of massive displacement, we understand why one important reason to inject food aid into Afghanistan may be to prevent further displacement. But it is important to remember that these necessary aid efforts, even if they are successful, cannot provide a guarantee of protection for the civilian population. The right of the Afghans to seek safe asylum must be respected. MSF is extremely concerned with the closing of all international borders with Afghanistan and the containment of the population. Non-refoulement, or the right not to be forcibly returned to an insecure area must also be upheld.

Currently, we have not witnessed the expected mass influx of Afghans across international borders. There is much speculation as to the reasons for this: have Afghans abandoned the more exposed, larger towns and taken shelter in the countryside? Have they been blocked along the roads? We don't know for sure, but what is certain is that borders remain officially closed, with even tighter controls than before. Only those who can afford the high price of smugglers can flee, leaving the poorest and most vulnerable behind.

We are also very concerned that, despite the ongoing preparations of aid agencies, led by UNHCR and including MSF, were refugees to arrive in big numbers today, they would not be adequately protected and assisted in host countries. For a number of years, Pakistan and Iran have been increasingly reluctant to accept newcomers, and our ongoing experience working in Jalozaï camp in Peshawar shows how difficult it is to assist Afghan refugees in Pakistan. New sites that have been identified for refugee camps in Pakistan are situated in insecure and inaccessible areas close to the border. In these locations, the safety of the refugees, and of the aid workers who would try to assist them, is far from assured. Moreover, these are desolate areas, where water and shade are in very scarce supply.

The borders must be opened to allow refugees to flee warfare and persecution. The internationally recognized right to seek protection and receive asylum in neighboring countries must be upheld. Adequate steps to receive refugees in safe and appropriate conditions must be taken.

#### CONCLUSION

To conclude, what is critical for MSF is that, in the midst of conflict, the fundamental needs of protection and relief for the Afghan people are met.

Therefore MSF would like to underline the following points:

- The rights of the Afghan civilian population to safety and humanitarian assistance should be assured by all parties to the conflict,
- By maintaining a clear distinction between military actions and aid operations, the U.S. government will contribute to the future involvement of independent and impartial humanitarian actors in Afghanistan,
- The U.S. Government should insist on the opening of the borders of neighboring countries to Afghan refugees,
- A large-scale independent humanitarian relief operation led by international and non-governmental organizations is needed inside and outside Afghanistan to provide effective assistance and protection to the civilian population, solely on the basis of assessed needs and in an impartial fashion. In neighboring coun-

tries, the conditions for refugees—current and future—must be substantially improved.

Mr. Chairman, we are grateful for the opportunity to express our concerns today in front of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you.

Mr. Bacon.

**STATEMENT OF MR. KEN BACON, PRESIDENT, REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Senator Wellstone. I want to thank you and Senator Boxer for holding this very timely hearing. It is timely, because it comes at a time when the U.S. is pursuing two imperatives. One is to attack terrorists and their protectors in Afghanistan, and, two, to feed the Afghan people. It is a campaign, as Prime Minister Blair has said, of bombs and bread.

I want to just make four points in order to leave time for questions. First, as has been amply documented here, Afghanistan has been a huge humanitarian crisis for years.

Prior to September 11, the World Food Program of the United Nations was providing rations to 3.8 million people. It had planned to step up to 5.5 million people even before September 11, and now, of course, the needs are 50,000 metric tons a month to meet the population in need of 5.5 to 7 million people.

Second, the U.S. has played a leading role in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, and that leadership continues. Since September 11, the U.S. has allocated \$320 million to meet the humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in neighboring countries. It is important to note that this is new money. It does not rob Peter to pay Paul. You are not taking money from the humanitarian aid for Africa or the Balkans. This is new money, and therefore, it is a very important addition.

The U.S. has acted quickly and generously to meet growing humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, and they should be applauded for this. Air drops of food are just one sign that the administration has incorporated humanitarian needs into its military, diplomatic, and economic responses to the attack. While the air drops of food are inefficient and expensive, they are better than nothing.

To be successful in meeting humanitarian needs, the U.S. must work with the United Nations and neighboring countries to resume significant food deliveries to Afghanistan over land.

Refugees International recommends a strategy of letting the country with food by the most efficient and effective means.

Available cross-border shipping by truck from Pakistan, Iran and the former Soviet republics in the north offer the best possibility to transport the maximum amount of food to areas with concentrations of vulnerable people.

This effort needs to begin at once as winter weather, especially in the north, will impair road transport. I was very glad to hear the news today that the World Food Program has started deliveries from four neighboring countries.

Senator WELLSTONE. And the question is whether that will be sustained or not.

Mr. BACON. That is the question, and only time will tell, but I think it does show that after suspending the deliveries on Sunday,

that they have moved as quickly as possible to restart deliveries, and this is a good sign indeed. I might also point out it is necessary to deliver seeds. Food isn't enough. We have to do more than just meet the immediate needs.

We have to prepare people to support themselves, and as Andrew Natsios pointed out, people have been eating their seed because they have no other food, so it is very important over the next month, and there is really—this is urgent, because there is probably only four to five weeks left in time to deliver seed for planting for the spring wheat crop, very important to get seeds in there as quickly as possible, particularly seeds that have been tested to grow in this climate.

My third point: While the current U.S. commitment is a good start, it is not enough. Given the magnitudes of the needs in Afghanistan and the likelihood that reconstruction assistance will be badly needed in the aftermath of a military campaign, it is probably best to view the \$320 million as a down payment. We clearly need something of the magnitude of the Biden proposal. It might even be too small.

Fourth, this is something that Congress, I think, should pay attention to for this crisis and future crises. The crisis in Afghanistan is extremely complex. The response involves military, economic, diplomatic, and humanitarian pieces. A lesson that clearly emerges from similar crises over the past decade is the importance of designating a cabinet-level officer, specifically and solely to take responsibility for humanitarian issues, in other words, the humanitarian coordinator.

In recent weeks, the President has announced a coordinator for homeland defense and a coordinator for counter-terrorism programs. I think the humanitarian program should have an equal stature at the table when the decisions are made.

Let me conclude with this very brief summary. Refugees are a sign of instability. Frequently refugees flee a country where the government does not work or fails to protect its own people. The immediate challenge is to meet the humanitarian needs of millions of Afghans, both those in the country and those who have already fled. After the current crisis, the U.S. and its allies will face a longer-term task of helping Afghanistan to become stable and prosperous.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ken Bacon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH H. BACON

At the outset, I want to thank Senator Paul Wellstone, the Chairman, of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, for organizing this hearing on Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis. This hearing could not be more timely, because it comes as the U.S. is attacking terrorists and their protectors in Afghanistan, while moving to feed the Afghan people, a campaign of bombs and bread.

Afghanistan was one of the largest crises of displacement in the world well before the events of September 11, 2001. After more than 20 years of conflict, three years of drought, and the repressive policies of the Taliban regime, four million Afghans had sought refuge in neighboring countries, with as many as two million each in Pakistan and Iran. Inside the country some 800,000 people were displaced. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) was providing daily rations to 3.8 million people and were preparing to increase the number fed to a total of 5.5 million

through the long winter season. The United States was the leading funder of relief efforts for the Afghan people, providing \$183 million in FY 2001.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, it became clear that the initial focus of U.S. military retaliation would be in Afghanistan. Refugees International, joined by other humanitarian non-governmental organizations, immediately began pressing the Administration to recognize two imperatives: (1) the humanitarian imperative to continue to respond to the needs of the millions of vulnerable Afghan civilians who bear no responsibility whatsoever for the attacks on U.S. soil, and (2) the political imperative of ensuring that the U.S. military response did not harm innocent civilians and thereby jeopardize the moral high ground that the United States has been able to maintain as the victim of terrorism that targeted civilians in New York and Washington. We raised these points in a letter to President Bush and in subsequent meetings with administration and congressional officials. I have attached a copy of the letter to this testimony.

RI applauds the administration's decision to allocate \$320 million to respond to humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in neighboring countries. We are especially glad that this pledge comes from the extraordinary \$40 billion emergency fund approved by Congress and does not, therefore, reduce U.S. funding for other humanitarian crises around the world. The amount allocated by the Administration represents more than a fair share of the \$584 million requested by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his appeal to the international community for Afghan relief.

Nonetheless, given the magnitude of the needs in Afghanistan and the likelihood that reconstruction assistance will be badly needed in the aftermath of the U.S. military campaign, it is probably best to view the \$320 million as an initial investment in a lengthy and costly response to the needs of the Afghan people for peace, reconstruction, and development.

The most critical need at the moment is for significant food deliveries to Afghanistan to resume over land. As I have already noted, WFP had planned to provide daily rations to 5.5 million people in the coming months. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, WFP evacuated their expatriate staff and suspended food deliveries. Their extensive network of local staff, however, was able to maintain feeding programs using existing stocks. Last week they delivered 5,000 metric tons of additional food to Afghanistan, but the weekly requirement is about 12,000 tons. The WFP briefly suspended food shipments after military strikes began, but yesterday it announced that it was resuming overland food shipments through Iran.

Refugees International recommends a strategy of flooding the country with food by the most efficient and effective means available. Cross-border shipping by truck from Pakistan, Iran, and the former Soviet republics in the north offers the best possibility to transport the maximum amount of food to areas with concentrations of vulnerable people. This effort needs to begin at once, as winter weather, especially in the north, will impair road transport.

Airdrops of food are inefficient and expensive, but they are better than nothing. They should only be used as a last resort. Refugees International is concerned that the airdrops of individual emergency food packets organized by the U.S. military at the outset of the bombing campaign appear to be intended more to send a political message to the Afghan people and to the Muslim world than to reach large numbers of people at risk of starvation. The focus of the Administration should be to apply as much of the \$320 million as possible to getting food into Afghanistan by overland routes through WFP and non-governmental organizations.

Food deliveries inside Afghanistan will save lives and could also help prevent a refugee crisis on the borders of Pakistan, Iran, and other neighboring states. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that as many as 1.5 million people could seek refuge in neighboring states as a result of anti-terrorist military actions and hunger. A refugee outpouring of this magnitude would not only be a humanitarian crisis of massive proportions, it would potentially be politically destabilizing, especially in Pakistan and Iran, where resentment against Afghan refugees was already growing well before the events of September 11.

In this context, the preference is clearly to enable Afghans to remain in their homes and on their farms rather than to have them embark on a long, difficult, and dangerous journey to neighboring countries in search of food.

In the event that large numbers of Afghans decide to seek asylum in neighboring countries, the issue of whether the borders will be open immediately arises. Both Pakistan and Iran insist that their borders remain closed to new Afghan refugees. Both countries prefer that the needs of the displaced be met through cross-border operations to Afghans held in camps inside Afghanistan. Iran is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention that obligates it to provide asylum to vulnerable people

fleeing persecution, violence, and hunger. The UNHCR and the international community must insist that neighboring countries open their borders to Afghan refugees, with the understanding that under the principle of “burden sharing” receiving nations would receive appropriate financial assistance from the international community for their decision to honor their obligations.

Refugees International is concerned that UNHCR’s public comments on the issue of opening the borders to refugees at the recent Forum on Afghanistan Refugees and Displaced Persons (held in Geneva on October 5–6) appear designed to meet the governments of Pakistan and Iran halfway rather than taking a principled position on the right to asylum. Ruud Lubbers, the UN High Commissioner, has spoken of the possibility of establishing camps inside Afghanistan and of opening borders not for all refugees seeking protection but to assist and protect the vulnerable “temporarily.” While this approach is presumably designed to advance delicate negotiations with the governments of Pakistan and Iran, the Afghan people depend on UN14CR to support their right to asylum at this difficult moment. RI urges the administration to insist that the borders of neighboring countries be open to refugees. The U.S. should also intervene with the High Commissioner to ensure that he is vigorously supporting the right to asylum for Afghans.

The crisis in Afghanistan is complex. The U.S. response involves military, economic, diplomatic, and humanitarian elements. A lesson that clearly emerges from similar crises over the past decade is the importance of designating a Cabinet-level official specifically and solely to take charge of humanitarian issues. While all senior members of the U.S. team should be sensitive to humanitarian concerns, it is important to have one individual at the table who is responsible for the complex interplay among military, political, and humanitarian aspects of the operation. Recently, President Bush appointed coordinators for homeland defense and counter-terrorism programs.

The over-riding brief for such a humanitarian affairs coordinator should be to ensure that the interests of the Afghan civilians and refugees are protected. The humanitarian affairs coordinator can be either a military or civilian officer. This person could also be the senior contact point for the UN, other international organizations, and NGOs involved on the humanitarian front. What is essential is that the coordinator be in the inner circle of those who are managing the U.S. part of the decision-making process. To do less will court humanitarian errors that will affect the lives of many and the overall credibility of the U.S. government.

In conclusion, let me summarize my three main points:

- The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan predates the September 11th attack against the United States and the U.S. military response to that attack.
- The international community, led by the U.S., has responded well and quickly to the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people.
- Nevertheless, more needs to be done to meet the Afghan people’s needs for food, shelter and medical supplies, and after the current crisis is over, the international community will face the challenge of helping to rebuild Afghanistan.

Refugees are a sign of instability. Frequently, refugees flee a country where the government does not work or fails to protect its own people. The immediate challenge is to meet the humanitarian needs of millions of Afghans, both those inside the country and those in refugee camps outside Afghanistan. After the current crisis, the U.S. and its allies will face a longer term task of helping Afghanistan to become stable and prosperous.

[The letter referred to by Mr. Bacon follows:]

REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL,  
*Washington, DC,*  
*September 18, 2001.*

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH,  
*The White House, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

As you plan the military, diplomatic, and economic responses needed to destroy the terrorist network that attacked the United States, it is important that you also plan to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan, a country that already is the site of the greatest crisis of hunger and displacement in the world.

Twenty-two years of war, three years of drought, and the difficulties caused by the repressive Taliban regime have caused nearly 4 million Afghans to flee to Iran and Pakistan. According to the United Nations, 5 million people still in the country

are in danger of starvation due to a three-year drought. Hoping to escape a U.S. response to last week's devastation, 100,000 Afghans have fled Kabul and other cities and the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar is now half-empty.

Many people in rural parts of the country are on famine rations: bitter wild roots and grass mixed with wheat flour to make bread. Tens of thousands of people in the cities, including war widows, the elderly, and orphans, are completely dependent upon international aid for their survival. Only food aid—mostly U.S.-donated wheat—stands between them and starvation.

Yet most UN and non-governmental relief agencies have pulled out of Afghanistan following last week's attack against the U.S. The World Food Program says it has only enough food in the country for two weeks of distribution by local personnel. The borders with Pakistan and Iran are mostly closed to the flow of people and goods.

The U.S. experience in the Gulf War suggests the importance of anticipating and minimizing refugee flows and starvation. In the Gulf War, the U.S. was caught by surprise when over 2 million Kurds fled, some to neighboring Turkey and Iran, to escape Saddam Hussein, necessitating an urgent humanitarian response for which the international community was largely unprepared.

*Refugees International* recommends that the administration prepare a humanitarian impact analysis for military operations and contingency plans to deal with humanitarian challenges. Military operations should be planned to minimize the impact on people already tottering on the edge of famine and to repair humanitarian damage as soon as possible.

Considering that the war is with terrorists and their supporters, not with the Afghan people, the U.S. also needs to find a way to resume relief operations and food aid to the Afghan people. The first step should be immediate consultations with the UN Secretary General to find ways to enable relief workers to return safely to the country and resume operations. The UN must anticipate huge refugee and humanitarian problems and, as it did in Macedonia this summer, get the people and the resources into the region to deal with them.

The most appalling and universally condemned aspect of last week's attack against the U.S. was the targeting of innocent civilians. The U.S. cannot afford to be accused of doing the same in its response. The U.S. requires the support of moderate Muslims around the world and this necessitates maintaining the moral high ground. A humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan, if attributed to U.S. military operations, could leave the American people even more vulnerable to terrorism in the future. The United States wants to win the war against terrorism—not sow the seeds of future problems.

Sincerely,

KENNETH H. BACON,  
*President.*

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

Senator Wellstone, it is my pleasure to introduce Eleanor Smeal, the president of the Feminist Majority. We already heard of the plight of these people. We are looking at everything coming together: drought, famine, no human rights, a place where terrorism breeds, all of this coming down, and particularly a place where women just have absolutely no rights whatsoever, and all this was brought to my attention so long ago by Ellie Smeal and the grassroots women in California who work with her.

So it is certainly an honor for me to introduce her, and, Senator Wellstone, thank you for that honor.

**STATEMENT OF MS. ELEANOR SMEAL, PRESIDENT, FEMINIST MAJORITY, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

Ms. SMEAL. Thank you, Senator Boxer, and thank you for being with us for so many years, supporting our efforts, and also thank your able staff. Sean Moore has been right there, too. As you know, our campaign to stop gender apartheid has been working not only at the national but at the grassroots level, very strong in California, but really in 49 of the 50 states.

I would also like to thank Senator Wellstone for your efforts here.

We have been involved in this campaign to stop gender apartheid in Afghanistan since 1997. We got involved because of the horrific treatment of women, but when we got involved, we also learned about the terrible humanitarian crisis, so we immediately tried to get more humanitarian aid to save lives.

In addition, we looked at the situation and realized that there must be not only nonrecognition of the Taliban by the United States and the United Nations, but also that there had to be more pressure on both Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to withdraw their support for the Taliban. As we all know, the United States came out against recognition, and, Senator Boxer, you played a major part in that. And we also came against the construction of a major oil pipeline there, and UNOCAL withdrew, again because the California women played a major role in that.

We would like to point out that we came out early to have the Taliban designated as a terrorist organization, and I want to note that to this date, they are still not designated as a terrorist organization, and we think that should still happen.

Right now, our grassroots effort has the endorsement of over 200 women's rights and human rights organizations that are co-sponsoring it, and Mavis Leno is our chair, our national chair.

Hundreds of thousands of people now have written letters and signed petitions and sent e-mails to the Clinton administration and to the Bush administration, urging help for the Afghan women and for humanitarian aid. I point this out, because I want to stress the huge support for this among the American people. The American people do see a difference between the Taliban and the humanitarian situation, and the Afghan people and especially the women there, and this constituency is deep. It is profound, and it has responded even more now in wake of the tragic events of September 11.

We have now seen an outpouring. People are sending more help. They are trying to encourage that there be more aid, and indeed, some 800 different groups at the local level are trying themselves to raise money to help local Afghan groups and in the refugee areas to do clinics and schools. I have heard today—there has been so many different numbers of the millions of people in trouble.

The one thing I would like to emphasize is that prior to September 11, millions have fled, and hundreds of thousands in this year alone. The numbers are so big, they are staggering.

The refugee population is the single biggest in the world, and so I just want us to try to get our arms around the numbers, even though they might differ some, because the need is so great.

Our staff has visited the refugee areas, and they are horrific. There is little food. Families have only a plastic sheeting for shelter, and there is virtually no sanitation.

This has been going on. This is a near holocaust situation, and as far as health care, please, it is so minimal that one woman every 30 minutes, somebody calculated, is dying from childbirth, and one in four children are dying before the age of 5, and the infant mortality rate is soaring. This is staggering, and that is why we must think big. Yes. America has—the United States has led in humanitarian aid, but I must stress, it has been too little, and we believe that the United Nations' appeals have been very modest. The rea-

son they have been so modest is because until September 11, all we could hear about is donor nation exhaustion, because this war had been going on so long.

Consequently, the appeals have been modest, and even though the latest appeal, which is for 584 million—and I am thrilled that we now have 730 million—it too was modest, and let us point out why.

First, the United Nations only counts as refugees those who live in the refugee camps, and most people do not live—

Senator WELLSTONE. Excuse me, Ms. Smeal. Please go on a little longer.

Ms. SMEAL. Also the appeal only had 3 percent in it for health care and 1 percent in it for education, and we all know the importance of the education. We are heartened by Bush's response, but we agree with Senator Biden that we should be thinking in terms of billions of dollars, and we must be thinking in terms of really reconstructing this country, and at the center of it must be women. We are—we were the majority of the health care workers. We are 70 percent of the teachers. We must be at the center of it.

And right now, we are urging that funds be set aside and go directly to women-led, Afghan women-led NGOs. Right now, we give money to the big international ones, but it is these little NGOs—and they are only little, because no one gives them aid. They have the capability; they have the talent.

They have got to be part of the reconstruction effort, so we must support them. And they are there; they can do more.

They are running the clinics and schools, and we hope that we will, in fact, support them directly in the reconstruction.

I hear so much about what is going to happen afterwards.

We plead. We think in terms of a constitutional democracy.

They had one. They had one in 1964. By the way, it has an equal rights amendment for women in there. They had universal suffrage. Women were in the parliament. We were judges.

There was a separate and independent judiciary, so we don't have to start from scratch. You can build and build on a very capable indigenous Afghan women.

We have had the privilege of working with many Afghan women. Yes, it is true, there is a large illiterate population, but it is also true there are many educated women.

They have been doctors; they have been engineers, lawyers.

These are people who could and must be at the decision-making table. And so we are hoping that when we think, we think in terms of what we did after World War II, that we reconstruct, we help to build a democracy, that we make sure that people are at the table, and that, in fact, their rights are fully restored, and that, indeed, that it is not treated as a side issue.

I believe in this issue. In many ways, women were the canaries in the mine. If we had seen, if the world had responded faster, maybe, maybe more could have been averted, but in this time, they cannot be ignored. They must be treated as a major part of the solution of this problem.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Eleanor Smeal follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. ELEANOR SMEAL

Since early 1997, the Feminist Majority and its sister organization the Feminist Majority Foundation have led the Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan in order to raise public awareness about the treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan and to urge the U.S. and the U.N. to do all in their power to restore the rights of women and to address this humanitarian disaster. Throughout this campaign, we urged non-recognition of the Taliban by the United States and the United Nations, designation of the Taliban as an international terrorist organization, pressure on Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to withdraw their support for the Taliban, and that the construction of an oil and gas pipeline through Afghanistan that would have supplied millions of dollars in profits to the Taliban be stopped. As you know, the U.S. and the U.N. did come out against the recognition of the Taliban in an event at the White House on March 11, 1998 in commemoration of International Women's Day (March 8) and UNOCAL did stop the pipeline. But to this date, the U.S. has still not designated the Taliban as an international terrorist organization. To date, over 200 women's rights and human rights organizations are co-sponsoring our national campaign chaired by Mavis Leno.

Hundreds of thousands of individuals have written letters, signed petitions, and sent e-mails to urge both the Clinton Administration and now the Bush Administration to do everything in their power to restore the human rights of Afghan women. We have formed over 800 Action Teams to Help Afghan Women nationwide. These teams, which include girl scout troops, community organizations, classrooms, and groups of family, friends, and co-workers, are organizing petition drives and raising funds to support schools and clinics run by Afghan women in Pakistan for refugees. In both 1999 and 2000, officials at the U.S. State Department told us that we had successfully mobilized a U.S. constituency on a foreign policy issue and that they had received more mail from Americans on restoring women's rights in Afghanistan than on any other foreign policy issue.

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, we have seen an overwhelming outpouring of public support for Afghan women. People have responded to our message that humanitarian aid must be dramatically increased and that Afghan women must be freed. With the nation's focus on Afghanistan and increased visibility about the plight of Afghan women, Americans want to know how to help. In the past few weeks, tens of thousands of individuals have used our website to send messages to the Administration and to Congress urging that Afghan women not be forgotten. Action teams are now forming at the incredible pace of more than 100 per week.

People are outraged about the Taliban's brutal treatment of women. Women were the first victims of the Taliban, and the public is becoming increasingly aware of this fact. The public has now seen broadcast on television again and again film footage of women being beaten and executed for violating the Taliban's decrees banning women from employment, from attending school, from leaving their homes without a close male relative and without wearing the head-to-toe burqa shroud.

Before September 11, the tragic conditions of Afghanistan—including the worst drought in 30 years, 23 years of military fighting, and the barbaric treatment of women and minorities by the Taliban—had resulted in massive numbers of Afghan refugees. Some 3.5 million Afghan refugees had fled to Pakistan alone, 2 million in the refugee camps and 1.5 million in the cities and villages. Another 1.5 million refugees are in Iran, and hundreds of thousands more in other neighboring countries. Since September 11, the plight of refugees and displaced persons has become even more perilous and the number of people attempting to flee Afghanistan and its cities has increased dramatically.

Now the United Nations expects that the total number of Afghans in need of humanitarian assistance soon will be at least 7.5 million. This estimate includes 1.2 million who are internally displaced within Afghanistan and have left their homes to find food and shelter; another 4.2 million who are internally stranded and without adequate resources to survive; and tens of thousands who have escaped to neighboring countries since September 11 despite border closings. The estimate of vulnerable people also includes some 2 million vulnerable refugees among the 3.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, 1.5 million in Iran, and at least 200,000 in other neighboring countries. Seventy-five percent of refugees are women and children.

Our staff has visited the refugee areas in Pakistan. The conditions in which these refugees fight for survival are horrific with little food, with many families having no more than plastic sheets for shelter, and with virtually no sanitation. These conditions have resulted in widespread disease, death, and regional instability. According to some estimates, one woman is dying in childbirth every 30 minutes and one in four children are dying before 5 years of age.

The world response to this widespread suffering and near holocaust situation has been insufficient. Prior to September 11, the USA was leading all nations in providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan by contributing some \$70 million in 1999 and \$113 million in 2000. In 2001, the U.S. had been scheduled to provide \$125 million in aid.

We applaud the work of the United Nations' agencies, especially the World Food Program, in Afghanistan. But for years they have been forced to underestimate the needs of Afghan refugees and Afghan people because of the lack of donor nation response. Prior to September 11, we heard constantly of donor nation exhaustion. Consequently, the United Nations appeals have tended to be very modest. Although the most recent consolidated appeal is considerably more than in the past, we believe it still underestimates the real needs in several important respects:

- First, the United Nations only counts as refugees and provides assistance to those who live in the refugee camps. However, almost half of the refugees in Pakistan approximately 1.5 million—live outside of camps. These desperate refugees, who live in cities and villages in Pakistan, mostly belong to the Hazara, Uzbek, and Tajik ethnic minorities who have been most persecuted by the Taliban and who fear the Pashtun dominated camps in which the Taliban has had influence. These urban refugees receive virtually no assistance from the UN, and are in desperate need of food, health care, and education programs.
- Second, the current appeal provides very little for health or education. Only 3 percent of the United Nations appeal is devoted to health. Nor are sufficient funds for education inside and outside of the camps being requested in the appeal. Education is less than 1 percent of the United Nations appeal. Education is not a luxury, but a core component of ending terrorism and promoting democracy. We cannot lose a generation of Afghan girls and boys. Education for refugee girls is necessary to make up for the denial of education under the Taliban, and to make possible the participation of young women in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The availability of education for boys is necessary to counteract the madrassas (so-called religious schools) which are the source of foot soldiers for the Taliban.
- Finally, the LTN Appeal provides only 6 months of bare subsistence rations. Of the food and support needs of \$188 million, the commodities included are only wheat, vegetable oil, pulses (lentils), salt, wheat/soy blend, sugar, and high energy biscuits.

We appreciate that on October 401 President Bush announced a commitment of an additional \$295 million in U.S. emergency humanitarian aid to suffering people in Afghanistan and to Afghan refugees. This emergency humanitarian package is a critically needed escalation of aid that will help save the lives of millions of innocent Afghans, especially women and children, many of whom are near starvation in pre-famine condition, without shelter, and without health care.

The United States' leadership in meeting a significant portion of the United Nations \$584 million appeal for emergency assistance is very heartening. However, we believe that the needs of Afghan refugees are even more massive and that our government must do even more to meet them.

We commend and support the call of the Chairman of this Committee, Senator Joseph Biden, for a multi-billion dollar infusion of humanitarian relief for Afghanistan and for the surrounding region to address refugees' humanitarian needs and to sustain long-term reconstruction efforts. His leadership and vision in this call are timely and extremely needed.

Our understanding is that of the funds that have recently been announced by President Bush, a yet to be determined portion will go towards the UN appeal for UN sponsored humanitarian aid and another portion of funds will go to programs carried out by other international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

No funds, however, are scheduled to be granted directly to women-led NGOs. I would like to stress the importance of the U.S. providing direct funding to Afghan women led NGOs. Humanitarian funds from the United States and the United Nations also should go directly to Afghan women-led humanitarian organizations that are delivering desperately needed health, education, and relief services. These groups are in a position to help large numbers of Afghan women and girls living as refugees in Pakistan, and where possible in Afghanistan, if only they had more resources to survive and to contend with the increasing need. The future of a peaceful, stable, and democratic Afghanistan depends in large measure upon the strength of these Afghan women's organizations and the women and girls to whom they are providing assistance and educational opportunities.

The removal of the Taliban together with the restoration of the rights of women, broad-based, multi-ethnic constitutional democracy, and economic development are essential in the fights to end terrorism and to free women. In any rebuilding of Afghanistan, women must be in leadership roles. We have been urging the State Department that Afghan women not be forgotten in the U.S. strategies to combat terrorism, and in their planning for a post-bin Laden and post-Taliban Afghanistan.

In order to gain regional stability and build democracy instead of dictatorship, the United States must make a commitment to provide not only significant emergency humanitarian assistance but also long-range assistance to help rebuild the economy and infrastructure of Afghanistan. To fight the Soviet Union, we gave billions to Afghanistan in the form of arms and training for the mujahedeen that gave rise to the Taliban. To combat terrorism, we must help rebuild Afghanistan and restore it to a civil society dependent on neither opium nor heroin trafficking and smuggling. We realized after World War II that the only way to break the back of fascism was to re-establish constitutional democracies in Germany and Italy, to establish one in Japan, to provide rights to women, and to provide economic development assistance.

In the reconstruction, women will be essential. If a Loya Jirga or any other assembly takes place, there must be representation of women from each of the different parties and ethnic groups and women's groups must be included so that women leaders will be decision makers for Afghanistan's future. Afghan women even in these most difficult times have been running clandestine schools, health clinics in both Afghanistan and in refugee areas, and are key in relief programs and income generation projects in the refugee areas. Despite untold hardships, Afghan women have been leading NGOs in the refugee areas. These women must be involved in charting the future of the country.

During the past five years, the Feminist Majority has had the privilege of working with many Afghan women leaders. We have been impressed and inspired by their courage, knowledge, and ability to provide services, work and survive in the most repressive regime against women in the history of the world. They remind us that women were leaders, members of parliament, educators, civil servants, doctors, and technicians before the Taliban. Indeed, with so many men killed in 23 years of war, women are thought to be 60-70 percent of the adult population and have managed to keep going the few remnants of Afghan civil society that exist today. They have risked their own lives and some have lost their lives to run home schools and health clinics despite Taliban edicts. These women leaders must be a part of the peace process and the rebuilding of their country. They must be at the table as decision makers.

We cannot be fooled by those who would use culture and religion as an excuse for the marginalization or exclusion of women in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Taliban's decrees are foreign to Islam, to the culture, and to the people of Afghanistan. Since the 1950s, women and girls in Kabul and in many other parts of the country attended schools as did boys. Before the Taliban gained dominance in Afghanistan, women were a crucial part of the workforce. Afghan women have a history of public service leadership and were believed to be 30% of its civil bureaucracy. For example, in Kabul, before the Taliban took over, women were: over 70 percent of teachers were women; 40 percent of doctors and the vast majority of health care workers were women; and over half the university students.

If civil society is to be rebuilt in Afghanistan and the rogue state that has been sustained by drug trafficking is to be brought to an end, all citizens—especially those in the health care and education fields—must be utilized. The employment of these workers—who are mostly women—is essential to the rebuilding of the country's social infrastructure and civilization itself. The restoration of the rights of women is crucial both for the sake of human rights and to make possible the return to civil society. The United States would be repeating a tragic mistake if it again turns to another set of extremists as it did to repel the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and chooses a dictatorship as the most expedient strategy to replace the Taliban. The restoration of a broad-based democracy, representative of both ethnic minorities and women, with women at the table, is necessary to break the back of a terrorist and a war-torn existence. We urge you to think long-term—in this case, the right thing to do is also the best thing for global security, human rights, and economic development.

In a discussion at the State Department, we were asked would the U.S. people support a massive reconstruction of Afghanistan or would the U.S. people rather support simply sustaining a tolerable subsistence economy in Afghanistan. We often hear today (à la Tom Brokaw) the World War II generation of Americans referred to as the "greatest generation." We are proud we fought fascism, rebuilt the economies of Germany and Japan, and helped to establish democracies in these nations with women's rights. We helped to establish in post WWII, a United Nations and

under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If this declaration is to mean anything, we must help to restore women's rights in this most abused nation—Afghanistan—and we must restore its democracy. Afghanistan first adopted a constitutional democracy in 1964 that included full universal suffrage, an equal rights amendment for women that even included equal pay provisions, and a separation of powers with an independent judiciary. Women were members of the Parliament and were judges.

We know today that literally millions of Americans are appalled at the Taliban's treatment of its own people, especially its women. We know from our work at the grass roots level in 49 states of the union that Americans want women's rights restored in Afghanistan and for this society to return to normalcy. We as Americans do feel a moral obligation to Afghanistan because it was the last stop in the Cold War. We can be the "greatest generation" today. We must meet the challenge and as our parents, not settle for expediency but strive for the dream of democracy and human rights for all—and in Eleanor Roosevelt's memory, we cannot forget the women.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you so much. What I am going to do is just lay out some of my concerns all at once, and then kind of have you respond, and that is the most efficient use of time.

There are people—there is the whole issue of conditions right now in the refugee camps which are deplorable, and also I have concerns about the security right now of these camps, and I want to talk about that with each one of you. Then are the people left behind, many of whom by definition are elderly, infirm, more vulnerable, left behind to eat meals of locusts and animal fodder by reports?

Here are some of the questions I have. Number one, it seems to me that the convoys—and, Ken, you were talking about this, the UNWFP—the convoys, the air drops, it is 1 percent, less than 1 percent, and not all that efficient, and the earlier testimony was we can't rely on that anyway. I think there is agreement. You have got to get this in by the convoys; you have got to get the food in this way. So one question I have is: I would think that is going to be a priority for our government, to somehow do what we need to do to make sure those convoys can continue to be coming in with food. That is a question I have for you, whether you would agree.

There is the question of—there have been some reports, as long as we are talking about NGOs and the United Nations, there have been some reports of UN and NGO offices being burned in Pakistan by anti-American protesters, and so I want you to speak to whether or not you think there is sufficient steps being taken to protect humanitarian workers, including women, who are associated with these international and local organizations in Pakistan.

And then finally—I guess those are the first order questions. At some point in time, I want to get your perspective. Your organization has been in Afghanistan a long time, and the Taliban are widely despised for all the right reasons.

I also understand that there are a significant number of Afghans that are alarmed or express alarm at the prospect of the Northern Alliance, that they might return to power, given their record of serious abuses, including rape and massacres and indiscriminate bombing that were committed while they were in power, and I want to ask you whether or not that sentiment—to what extent that sentiment is widespread or not. That is a flow of questions, starting with Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. Sure. On convoys, you are absolutely right.

They have to continue. Andrew Natsios told of a bunch of NGOs yesterday that the U.S. is totally committed to making sure the convoys flow as freely as possible. The key here is many entry points, not just through Pakistan or through Iran, but also through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. There are efforts underway to open the so-called Friendship Ridge from Uzbekistan into Afghanistan, and that would be helpful.

Convoys are obviously subject to attack, and one of the issues that our government and the UN is looking at is how to secure the convoys. I don't think anybody has good answers.

Right now there is another question. Once you get the food into Afghanistan, how do you make sure that it is not taken by the wrong people, taken by the military or the Taliban forces.

One way to do that would be so-called web feeding, that is, a sort of hot, prepared meals rather than the giveaway packets of food. Usually people with AK-47s don't like to stand in line to get hand-out dinners in refugee camps.

But these are details that have to be worked out to make sure that, one, the food gets in, and, two, it goes to the right people. Obviously security is a problem for humanitarian workers, and that is something that the UN has never been particularly good at. It is something that the UN and NGOs are paying more attention to, but ultimately we have to rely, as much as possible, on the governments of Pakistan and Iran to provide the security for the camps and for the humanitarian workers. The problem has been greater in Pakistan than Iran.

Finally, there is an urgent problem that demands attention, and that is while Pakistan is preventing refugees from coming in right now, there are signs that they are preparing to relent. They are preparing some camps in the northwest frontier province, which is generally a very hostile area, and camps there could be very dangerous, both for refugees and for humanitarian workers. So it is imperative that the U.S., the UN, and other nations work very hard to try to get Pakistan to relocate whatever new camps it sets up.

This is a difficult issue, but it is one that could be crucially important to the protection of refugees and the people who help them.

Ms. SMEAL. On the convoys, one thing I want to point out is that most of the non-Afghan humanitarian workers have left Afghanistan, so again it is one of the reasons I think we must invest in Afghan workers, because they are the only ones that are there, and even they are discombobulated under these conditions. Obviously we have to provide security, but, in fact, we have superior forces and can do that.

But one of the things that I want to emphasize is even the people in the refugee areas outside of Afghanistan do not have enough food, and so that also is a serious problem. And, by the way, the reason so many of the refugees are not in the camps is because they don't think they are secure. Some of the camps, the Taliban have been holding sway over, and so many of the ethnic groups who they have been persecuting, such as the Hazarachs and Tajiks are afraid to go into the camps, and not only that. So are women, because, indeed, they have been harassing and doing things to women in some of these areas.

And so basically you have a lot of people who are afraid to be in the camps. That is why we are so pleading with our government and the United Nations to please count who are in the refugee areas but simply are not in these camps that are very dangerous for them, because there hasn't been security in quite a long time.

And I want to just read, because there is so much been done about this package, that is supposed to be 2,200 calories in this little yellow package. I want to read what we are giving. We are giving wheat—and this is now from the World Food Program, which I totally respect. Catherine Brutini has done one magnificent job. But this is what we give. It is wheat, vegetable oil, pulses which is lentils—I assume dry—salt, wheat soy blend, sugar, and high energy biscuits.

So what does that really boil down to? It is principally bread and water, and the water isn't clean. I don't want us to feel so generous and so good here. When I realize what these folks are surviving on, no wonder the infant mortality is so high. No wonder children aren't surviving. Couldn't we put some dry milk in it? Couldn't we get a little ingenious and get some more food in this? You can't—I don't understand how these people survived this long, but this is literally from the food health program, and it is really scary. And there is no sanitation, remember, in these areas.

And so no wonder, you know, there is unrest in Pakistan. That is where the bulk of the people are. No wonder there is unrest, because there has not been enough aid, so we have got to do far better, and we have got to get with a much bigger program.

Mr. DE TORRENTE. I think the issue of the convoys has already been answered clearly. Going through the established aid operations that are already on the ground and have done the assessments, that have targeted the people, is the way to go, and that is what we think should happen, a big effort of assistance going through these already-established channels and people who are on the ground, and who can target the beneficiaries in a good way.

On security of NGOs, I think really there are different approaches to security. One, you could put them in like two different camps. One is to say that aid workers should be physically protected, meaning higher armed guards or the like.

The other is to say that the security relies on the consent of the people and the authorities of the areas in which you try to provide relief.

And actually that is the consent, is the consensual approach is the one that organizations like ourselves who are unarmed and who go and work in very difficult environments throughout the world, not only in Afghanistan. It is the one we rely on, and that is why I stressed before the fact of being perceived as neutral, as independent, as only concerned with humanitarian issues is so important for the security of staff. And this is why this point about separating these agendas is so critical.

So I think it will go some way. It won't go all the way.

We know there is anti-western sentiment, even before the U.S. military was dropping food, air drops. I am not saying it is only due to that. I think there is anti-western sentiment generally, which is going to be difficult to combat, but it does contribute to this problem.

For security of refugees, I want to come back to that, for security of refugees in Pakistan especially. As I said before, the camps, the sites for new influx that have been determined so far are really in areas where security of refugees, were they able to cross, cannot be guaranteed.

These are areas—these are called tribal areas of Pakistan. There is none under direct control of the Pakistan government. There are an array of different forces there.

This is an ethnically homogeneous area. If you are from a different ethnic minority—we heard about Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazarahs. If you go to these areas, it will be very difficult for you to be protected and to be safe. I think this is important. This is why the people have to be brought further inland, allowed to come further inland in the areas where they can be safer and where international staff can have access to them for assistance.

Your third question had to do with the situation in the Northern Alliance areas. I was there very recently, in August, and I would say that conditions are better, but not significantly better, especially for women. Women—the key difference—there are two key differences. One is that girls are allowed to go to school and women can be teachers, can teach children. The other one is that the Islamic rules are not enforced by an institution such as the religious police, such as in the Taliban areas. Therefore, it is more diffuse.

However, the issue of if you are a woman and you go to a health center, you need to be accompanied by your husband or male relative. Just like in the Taliban areas, women have to wear burqas in the Northern Alliance areas. Women in many of these areas are not allowed to go to the market, for instance.

So the type of situation we do see has similarities with the situation in the Taliban areas. I think we should recognize that, and so the health problems of women that we heard about before are quite similar in these different parts of the country.

In terms of the general condition, the other point I wanted to make about that is that throughout the country, the war has had a big impact. There has been militarization of the society. The people who have risen to power are military actors, and they control the economic and the political arena.

The social concerns, health issues, and so on are really at the bottom of the list. In the Northern Alliance areas, there are very few health centers, clinics, *et cetera*. There are very few Afghan medical staff, and it is really a link through international organizations such as ourselves that these structures, these very few remaining structures, can be maintained.

So this is just to say that we should not see it in terms of two completely different areas of the country. There are similarities between them, although I do stress that the situation in the Taliban areas on a number of counts is significantly worse.

Senator WELLSTONE. Senator Boxer?

Senator BOXER. Mr. de Torrente, I think you have proven the point Ellie Smeal made, that even where the women can go to school and teach, it is still oppressive with the Northern Alliance, and when she says that the women should be the central part of the rebuild, I think this is absolutely what has to happen, and I

am going to dedicate myself to being that voice, because that is the voice of reason.

That is the voice of moderation, the women's voices, so that is something we really must keep in mind, so thank you for talking about what it is like for women to live even with the Northern Alliance, which is supposed to be the most liberal compared to the Taliban. We have got human rights violations all over the place from them toward the women, and so I think this is key.

Ms. Smeal, do you want to add to that?

Ms. Smeal. Yes. Remember, the Northern Alliance and the Taliban come from the mujaheddin, which were extremists and religious extremists, but also who were involved in drug trafficking, and basically we really shouldn't replace one set of extremists with another. Although there is no question the Northern Alliance is better, it is a matter of degree here, and that is why I keep urging so much that constitutional democracy and that we return to civil society where we reach out to not just military commanders who came out of this whole, defeating the Soviets, but to people who were the part of the Afghan society prior to all of this.

Now, one other major thing—and it is hard to keep in our brain, but because of all of this war, the majority of adults are women. Some people estimate in some areas we are 60 and 70 percent of the adults, and so because they are even—the Taliban is stepping down to 12-year-olds in their army. There is no way to rebuild without us, and we have to be at the center, and I really am grateful for your statement that you will make this a center focus, because we need it, because we keep dropping out.

And somehow I think people think, well, there is only two choices, or we have got to go to one of these military commanders, and others that are mentioned, too, have horrific human rights violations in their background.

Senator BOXER. We just have to see beneath the veil to get a sense of what it is like there. I keep coming back to this comment made by the USAID leader here on the part of the administration, and that is that people should stay in their homes. From what you know about what is planned—and I would ask this to all of you who care so deeply and who know this so well: Do you think that is a good message?

Let's say we had an opportunity to talk to those folks today who are frightened and afraid that they are running out of options. Would you tell them to stay in their homes?

Ms. Smeal. Well, you know, this is not inconsistent with what the State Department has been saying now for the five years I have been involved. In fact, there was a period very recently where we were putting more effort into having refugees go back than helping them where they were, even though it was clear it was unsafe where they were going back to.

I think in some ways it is a message that is even too late. We were looking at the numbers while he was talking, the number of the people estimated already displaced from their homes. There are people—they estimate that 4.2 million are internally stranded. We asked what that definition meant, and that is a new definition in the UN which means they are no longer in their homes, but they are in their village or city areas.

Okay. They have already moved, but they are not really, so that is internally stranded. Another 1.2 million are internally displaced within Afghanistan, and they are called internally displaced, not stranded. That means they have left their village or city, and they are looking for food and shelter elsewhere, so that is about 5.4 million, according to the UN, on the move within the country already.

And then I went through the numbers that are already in the refugee areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is 3.5 million, we estimate, and 2 million in the refugee camps, 11.5 million in the cities and towns, another million and a half in Iran, and hundreds of thousands in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. There is a lot of people on the move here, and it is sort of like trying to close the door after—what is it?—the barn door after the horse has left.

The other thing that we keep not mentioning, but I think—and I don't know if even my staff will agree, but, you know, we have admitted very few refugees into the United States or other countries. In 1996 and 1997, the United States accepted no refugees from Afghanistan. In 1998, it was, I think, 88; in 1999, it was 300-some. Last year, it was—I think it was—I am doing this off the top of my head—about 1,700. We can get you the numbers. Why did we close the doors, and it wasn't just us? It is all the world.

Remember, that ship off of Australia of several hundred Afghan refugees that no one would accept? I think there has to be some larger acceptance of refugees, especially young people who could go to college or go to graduate school, because they could go home and rebuild their countries. We have a scholarship program, trying to get young women out. We can't afford to lose a whole generation of women and still think we are going to rebuild this society, or a whole generation of people.

So I think part of this has to be thinking in terms of how we can train and educate while we are also reconstructing, and it certainly should be opening our doors, especially to those who are being persecuted because they spoke up. A woman who speaks out can be targeted for all kinds of abuse. We should be having more political refugees in this intense situation.

Senator BOXER. I know time is running out. I just want to make a comment, and then ask both of you to get back to that question. Ken and Nicolas, the question about whether you could tell people who haven't left their homes to stay in their homes, so think about that.

But I just wanted to underscore what you said. More than 80 percent of the world's refugees and displaced persons are women and children. So whatever happened to the gallant side of our spirits? Women and children, help them. And I know from what I can tell, there is not that many special programs to address the particular needs, and when you say—and it is worth repeating—Senator Wellstone, 26 percent of the children in Afghanistan die before the age of 5, 26 percent, and you just—on a day when we had great news about our life expectancy and our infant mortality going in the right direction, we have got to just do something about it.

Senator Wellstone and I were just talking that we really want to keep our team together here, to take a lot of what you have already told us, and there is a tremendous sense of urgency. And if I could be critical only a tiny bit—and it is not even critical, be-

cause this thing happened to us so fast that we got thrown into everything—it is whether it is air safety, if you will, or whether it is this abroad, we have to even go faster. We have to go faster.

How many weeks is it, Nicolas, until the winter, the snows come?

Mr. DE TORRENTE. Well, it depends where. Certain areas, certain passes are already starting to get snow, and by mid-October some passes will not be passable any longer.

Senator BOXER. We're practically at mid-October, so we have a humanitarian crisis that needs an urgent response, and we have to think big about it, and I think that is really our message we have gotten from all the panelists.

If you two can answer that question about, do you stay home if you haven't left, and then I will stop and turn it back to Senator Wellstone.

Mr. BACON. Refugees International has been urging for years that the best way to deal with the problem in Afghanistan is to get food to the villages so people can stay there. People are reluctant to leave their homes. They don't want to leave their homes and their families, but they will leave if they are not fed obviously.

The conditions in the refugee camps in Harak, for instance, in Afghanistan are horrific, and we feel everybody would be better off for many of the reasons that Mr. Natsios said earlier, if we could get food to them in their villages.

The problem is it is very difficult to do. There is very little transportation infrastructure. We are talking about a country as large as Texas. The topography is challenging, to say the least, so maybe Nicolas can say more about this, but we have long advocated this is the best thing to do.

We support the administration's desire to do that. we question whether it is possible.

Mr. DE TORRENTE. I think people have to have options.

They have two basic needs: security and sustenance, and being able to survive. And, therefore, clearly from a health perspective, if people stay in their homes, it is better, and we know the consequences of moving and being in this displaced persons camps. These are densely populated areas. It is difficult to control in terms of epidemic and so on, so it is clearly—it is better from a health perspective if people stay in their homes.

However, people move also because of a fear of violence, persecution, and fear, and we have seen—we did a survey in one of our refugee programs we are running in Mashad in Iran.

The date is a bit old, but it gives you an indication. This was in January of this year. We are asking people coming to our clinic and doing a questionnaire, and there we found that 70 percent of them had fled because of violence and fear, and either that the war was coming to them. This is the civil war. They had pockets throughout the country. There were a lot of local commanders that were opposing the Taliban in different areas.

It is not only the main front line, but a number of other areas, and persecution. There has been targeting of distinct ethnic groups such as the Hazarachs. Therefore, if it is a perfect world, you can guarantee security to all people.

Then, of course, they should be told not to go, but I think you cannot tell people to stay in their homes if there is still a threat

of violence that is hanging over their heads, and violence comes from many different quarters.

Senator BOXER. I so appreciate that. That was my sense, that in the perfect world, you are only dealing with a famine, which is awful in and of itself, but if that is the only thing you are dealing with, and you can have the flat land and the good weather and the convoys, yes. But my sense is a little bit of unrealistic talk here with an imagery of people staying in their homes and just waiting for the truck to pull up, like the milk truck used to pull up. It just is not right.

Ms. SMEAL. Plus the fact that the Taliban are persecuting women as a class. They are walking around with these religious police beating people. I mean, the whole atmosphere, plus they are now conscripting young kids. If they don't go with them, they shoot them, and so you might leave for that reason alone.

Senator BOXER. To get away from them shooting your youngest son.

Ms. SMEAL. By the way, I wanted to submit—I forgot my testimony formally, because it has a lot of stuff in it.

Senator WELLSTONE. Absolutely. That will be a part of the record, and, Nicolas, we will finish with you and Ken.

Mr. DE TORRENTE. Not to conclude, but just to—just on the reasons why people leave as a result of drought, just to give you an indication of how the process happened, I think it is important to realize this has been ongoing for three years now, and people—it has eroded their coping mechanisms over time. Three years ago, people had assets. They had livestock. They were richer people. There was sharing among them. They were coping and coping on their own within their communities without having to rely on outside assistance in a lot of these remote areas and remote villages.

But over time, they have had to sell off assets. They have had crops failing time after time, and this has put people to the brink, and what we have seen in going to rural areas and doing surveys is that all of a sudden, a village decides, We can't stay here any longer; it is just not feasible; no options left; let's take the little we have remaining and move. And that is what we have been seeing, is people moving from remote areas in provinces of Herat and these areas, and moving. That makes it when they move, it is really out of desperation and really as a means of last resort.

Therefore, we should try to reach out to them if we can, before they reach that point.

Senator WELLSTONE. Let me just agree with Senator Boxer that we thank you. I would like to thank the reporter who has been working so hard. It is really important to have this on the record, and I think both of us—and I think I speak for others who are here—it is hard for any of this to be symbolic. I mean, we would be less than fully human if we just had another committee hearing, another discussion. This is all just so compelling and so important and so before us right now.

Thank you for being here. The committee is adjourned.  
[Whereupon, at 4:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS: IS ENOUGH AID REACHING AFGHANISTAN?

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2001

U.S. SENATE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND  
SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND TERRORISM, COM-  
MITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,

*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 3:10 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Paul D. Wellstone (chairman of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs) presiding.

Present: Senators Wellstone and Lugar.

Senator WELLSTONE. The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs will come to order. I am going to be joined by Senator Boxer. I want to apologize to all. We had a briefing from the State Department and Defense Department that all Senators attended from 2 to 3, and some Senators are still there, but I would like to apologize to everyone for the inconvenience of having to wait an hour.

I want to again thank all of you for participating in today's hearing, and again apologize for the delay. Angelina Jolie is not here yet, but I had a chance to meet with her. She has been a UNHCR goodwill Ambassador, and she has recently visited the Afghan refugee camps. We want to thank Ms. Jolie for her fine leadership. She will be coming later on, and we will recognize her.

Events are moving extremely quickly in Afghanistan, with the military success by the anti-Taliban forces in the northern half of the country and with the winter closing rapidly, threatening the lives and well-being of millions of Afghans afflicted by drought and war.

The challenge the United States and its coalition partners now face is to translate the recent military successes into humanitarian action that delivers assistance to the Afghans quickly and effectively. The international community must continue to contribute significant resources to address the humanitarian needs of the Afghans. There were some delays at our own agencies, specifically with OMB, in releasing much-needed funds. That now is going fine. There were some delays, and this was unacceptable.

We now need to ensure that these resources arrive on the ground in a timely and efficient manner, and I believe that will happen. With Northern Alliance control of the area across from Termez, Uzbekistan excuses are running out for Uzbekistan not to open the

Friendship Bridge. My understanding is that may have happened today, which would speed crucial supplies into the country.

Further, the security situation must improve. The withdrawal of the Taliban—if I am not correct, and I thought that is what I heard, but I guess I cannot even talk about a briefing, so you can give me your latest assessment of the Friendship Bridge.

Further, the security situation must improve. The withdrawal of the Taliban has not resulted in a secure environment necessary for humanitarian efforts to move forward. There are deeply disturbing reports that Northern Alliance fighters seized UNICEF employees and trucks and that 89 tons of World Food Program supplies were stolen over the weekend.

It is unclear whether the Northern Alliance has the capacity to provide security and establish law and order. Consequently, the United Nations must move quickly to deploy a multinational force to establish security so that the humanitarian organizations can do their jobs. We must also begin planning now for a long-term commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan have endured 23 years of war misery, and the conflict has threatened international stability and placed enormous burdens on their limited means. The United States must not just talk the talk, but we must also walk the walk. We must show Afghans that we are not going to give up on them this time and turn our backs on them as we did before. We must show genuine solidarity and real generosity now.

For many of these innocent Afghans you can absolutely count on the fact that there will be others that will be making all kinds of offers to them in a very fluid environment, and I do not think it is at all too late for us to announce a bold economic reconstruction program, microenterprises program, microenterprises infrastructure, cash assistance, public health, you name it. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that our Government needs to, with the international community, move forward with this now.

It is time to reverse more than a decade of neglect. We must be willing to make a multiyear, multinational, and multibillion effort to rebuild Afghanistan. We must move quickly to put in place a long-term economic reconstruction package for this embattled nation, to be administered through the United Nation or another multinational entity.

We need to target assistance to the north now, which would have a huge symbolic importance and be a powerful incentive, I believe, to a push to the leaders in the south to abandon the Taliban and join the United States-led effort. We know that many of the Pashtun chiefs, including supporters of the Taliban, are already on the fence. If the Pashtuns are now going hungry, and if they were to see significant assistance enter in neighboring provinces, the seemingly intractable problem of forging a political consensus in Afghanistan might become a whole lot easier to solve.

I believe our reconstruction effort must focus on rebuilding basic infrastructure, repairing shattered bridges and roads, removing land mines, reconstructing irrigation systems, and drilling wells. Creation of secular schools will break the stranglehold of extremism and allow both boys and girls to make positive contributions to the development of their society. We must also rebuild the shat-

tered health infrastructure by establishing base hospital and village clinics.

Again, I would point out that there is a huge vacuum. You have got people without means, in desperate economic shape. Above and beyond the importance of this humanitarian assistance, I believe this economic package is an absolute must. The Afghans have been through enough hell. They deserve to live in a society where they can feed their children, live in safety, and participate fully in their country's development, regardless of gender, religious belief, or ethnicity.

I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Wellstone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

I want to thank all of you for participating in today's hearing, and I apologize for the delay due to a last minute briefing. I want to briefly introduce Angelina Jolie, UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador, who has recently visited the Afghan refugee camps.

Events are moving extremely quickly in Afghanistan, with the military successes by the anti-Taliban forces in the northern half of the country, and with winter closing in rapidly, threatening the lives and well being of millions of Afghans afflicted by drought and war.

The challenge the U.S. and its coalition partners now face is to translate the recent military successes into humanitarian action that delivers assistance to the Afghans quickly and effectively. The international community must continue to contribute significant resources to address the humanitarian needs of the Afghans. There were some delays at our own agencies in releasing much needed funds. This is unacceptable. We need to ensure that these resources arrive on the ground in a timely and efficient manner.

With Northern Alliance control of the area across from Termez, Uzbekistan, excuses are running out for Uzbekistan not to open the Friendship bridge, which would speed crucial supplies into the country.

Further, the security situation must improve. The withdrawal of the Taliban has not resulted in a secure environment necessary for humanitarian efforts to move forward. There are deeply disturbing reports that Northern Alliance fighters seized UNICEF employees and trucks, and that 89 tons of World Food Program supplies were stolen over the weekend. It is unclear whether the Northern Alliance has the capacity to provide security and establish law and order. Consequently, the United Nations must move quickly to deploy a multi-national force to establish security so that the humanitarian organizations can do their jobs.

We must also begin planning now for a long-term commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The people of the Afghanistan have endured 23 years of war and misery, and the conflict has threatened international stability, and placed enormous burdens on their limited means. The United States must not just talk the talk, but must also walk the walk—we must show Afghans that we are not going to give up on them this time, and turn our backs on them as we did before. We must show *genuine solidarity and real generosity now*.

It is time to reverse more than a decade of neglect. We must be willing to make a multiyear, multinational and multibillion effort to rebuild Afghanistan. We must move quickly to put in place a long-term economic reconstruction package for this embattled nation, to be administered through the United Nations or another multinational entity.

We need to target assistance to the north now, which would have huge symbolic importance and be a powerful incentive to the Pushtun leaders in the south to abandon the Taliban and join the U.S.-led effort. We know that many of the Pashtun chiefs, including current supporters of the Taliban, are already on the fence. If the Pashtuns who are now going hungry, saw significant assistance entering neighboring provinces, the seemingly intractable problem of forging a political consensus in Afghanistan might become a whole lot easier to solve.

I believe our reconstruction effort must focus on rebuilding basic infrastructure repairing shattered bridges and roads, removing land mines, reconstructing irrigation systems and drilling wells. Creation of secular schools will break the stranglehold of extremism, and allow both boys and girls to make positive contributions to the development of their society. We must also rebuild the shattered health infra-

structure by establishing basic hospitals and village clinics. The Afghans have been through enough hell. They deserve to live in a society where they can feed their children, live in safety and participate fully in their country's development regardless of gender, religious belief or ethnicity.

Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. Now, I know we are going to be joined by Senator Boxer, but I think since we have already held the hearing back for an hour we are going to proceed and then when Senator Boxer comes I know she will want to make an opening statement.

We are going to start with Bernd McConnell, who is Director of Central Asian Task Force and has done some wonderful work in Bosnia and really is, I think, a real expert in the best sense, Director of Central Asian Task Force, United States Agency for International Development, and then he will be followed by Alan Kreczko, who is Acting Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, Department of State.

Bernd McConnell will make it clear that Administrator Natsios was more than willing to testify, but when we put the hearing off for—he is now in the region, and when we put it off for an hour it just proved impossible, logistics-wise, to do the communication.

Joel Charny is going to join us in panel 2. This past month he has also been in the region. Mark Bartolini, vice president of Governmental Relations for the International Rescue Committee will also be testifying, and we owe a special debt of gratitude to George Devendorf, director of Emergency Operations for Mercy Corps, who I just talked to, and just came back from refugee camps I think last night, and who is utterly exhausted, but is here with us as well.

We are going to get a very important report from the ground and from the people that are responsible for administering humanitarian assistance. I think this hearing could not come at a more important time, and I very much again thank all of the panelists and journalists and others for your interest.

We will start out with Mr. McConnell.

**STATEMENT OF BERND McCONNELL, DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL ASIAN TASK FORCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Thank you, sir. First, I must apologize for not being Andrew Natsios. We were just unable, as you point out, to connect the electronic dots. He did want to emphasize that he is most available on his return over the weekend to come and brief you or anyone you would designate.

We do submit his testimony, the testimony he would have given for the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Natsios follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ANDREW S. NATSIOS, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Madam Chairman, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before your committee on the rapidly evolving humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. I submit this testimony even as I am leading a White House mission to the Central Asian Republics on Afghanistan's northern border. This mission signals to the world the importance President Bush places on a robust humanitarian response to this crisis. I am also exploring ways to enhance coordination with

our United Nations and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in this historic effort.

#### BACKGROUND

As you know, Afghanistan is a country in crisis, a crisis that predates the events of September 11th. Three years of drought have brought Afghans to the precipice, but this did not have to become a famine. It was five years of brutal Taliban misrule and neglect that have pushed Afghanistan over the edge. Nearly 1.5 million Afghans are now at risk of starving and 5–7 million Afghans are dependent on outside assistance to survive the combination of a harsh winter, pre-famine conditions, and the dislocation of conflict.

As I testified before you on October 10th of this year, the US Agency for International Development is working energetically with the World Food Program, other international organizations, and international and Afghan NGOs to implement the President's humanitarian strategy in that region. Of the \$320 million that President Bush announced on October 4th, USAID will implement \$195 million for emergency humanitarian programs. This includes \$96 million of International Disaster Assistance, \$95 million of P.L. 480 Title II resources, \$3 million for demining, and \$1 million for extraordinary operational expenses associated with the Afghanistan crisis. We have already committed \$51 million of the International Disaster Assistance funds and \$58.4 million of the P.L. 480 Title II money for aid organizations working in Afghanistan.

The U.S. humanitarian strategy is fully in operation inside Afghanistan. By that, I mean we are working diligently to deliver and distribute food and relief supplies to reduce death rates. We are focused on distribution of this food to rural villages to minimize population movements, because we know that death comes more easily to those forced to flee their homes. We are devising programs to stabilize rural food markets by increasing incomes (i.e., effective demand) so that commercial suppliers will bring food to those markets. We are developing humanitarian information for radio broadcasts into Afghanistan that tell people food is coming, thereby ensuring that aid reaches the intended recipients. Importantly, we are funding developmental relief activities—what we call “spot reconstruction” to begin the process of recovery even as we are preventing starvation.

Our geographic focus on the north is aimed at reducing the suffering of the most vulnerable groups in the population, as identified by the world Food Program vulnerability assessment map. This means we have been concentrating in the past month on opening entry points for food flows from the northern and western borders—through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran. The international aid community has pre-positioned relief stocks and trucks in these areas to be ready to open the spigots when circumstances allow.

We are very pleased that the World Food Program has been able to increase its delivery of food into Afghanistan so significantly—from an all-time high of 29,000 metric tons in October to 27,000 metric tons just in the first 11 days of November. The challenge that we now face is that of the capacity of NGOs to distribute within Afghanistan. Clearly, the absence of expatriate NGO staff and lack of security have been the greatest obstacles to getting food into peoples' hands.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

The stunning changes in the war campaign over this past weekend therefore present important new opportunities to respond to the most pressing needs of the north and northwest, but only when these military successes of the Northern Alliance are consolidated and converted into more secure circumstances within Afghanistan. Already, food is crossing the Turkmenistan border into Badghis and Faryab provinces, where NGOs and international organizations like Save the Children and International Organization for Migration are working.

When the road from Mazar-i-Sharif to Termez is secure, a high volume of food can begin to flow into the northern territories because of the road network radiating from Mazar. Use of barges to cross the Amu Darya River and the opening of the Friendship Bridge at Termez by the President of Uzbekistan are essential to this strategy. While barge traffic began yesterday, we are hopeful that the bridge also will be opened quickly as it will allow up to 25,000 metric tons a month to pass into Northern Afghanistan.

The World Food Program and the Russian emergency response agency, EMERCOM, are working together to expand cross-border deliveries from Tajikistan. However, reports indicate that the Kunduz-Bahglan area south of the Tajikistan border remains very much insecure and may take longer than other northern provinces to open up.

Finally, the resurgence of the Northern Alliance in the Herat-Ghor areas may enable the World Food Program (WFP) to reach very vulnerable populations in the Hazarajat central highlands and west more effectively. In fact, WFP reports that it has already dispatched to the Hazarajat and Ghor areas more than 13,000 metric tons of food, or nearly a half of the winter's requirements.

#### NEXT STEPS

Upon my return from the region, I will redouble our coordination efforts with United Nations and NGO partners to ensure that they have the support they need to capitalize on these openings within Afghanistan. We have 65,000 metric tons of U.S. wheat being off-loaded in Iran for transshipment to Mashad and the Central Asian entry points and another 100,000 metric tons of food being prepared for loading in the United States. We have just ordered another 55,000 metric tons of wheat and 17,000 metric tons of oil, pulses and blended foods to ensure that the WFP and NGO pipelines are filled through February or March, 2002. We have also given WFP a grant of \$6 million for procurement of 15,000 metric tons of wheat in Kazakhstan to meet immediate needs, but most of our food aid will come from the United States.

We will also actively engage with our NGO partners to increase our focus on spot reconstruction or developmental relief. It will be critical for vulnerable Afghans not only to eat for survival, but also to have clean water to drink, improved local roads to markets, seeds and other agricultural inputs for spring planting—the basic elements that will begin the rebuilding process from the bottom up. These programs will also show Afghans the tangible benefits of the ouster of the Taliban.

Finally, USAID will engage actively with our State and Treasury Department colleagues in the upcoming dialogue with other donors, IFIs and Afghans themselves on how best to make the transition from a crippled Afghanistan to a recovering, rebuilt Afghanistan.

Mr. McCONNELL. I thought I would just speak briefly about a couple of things, one of which is his trip, and I would like to start with a brief anecdote from the trip. One of the reasons we could not connect those dots is because Andrew Natsios went to Afghanistan today.

He went south of the Tajik border into a place that, hopefully, I will not butcher too badly in naming, Khohabakhodin, where there are a number of IDP areas within the boundaries of Afghanistan.

The anecdote I would like to share with you he told me just a little while ago, and that is, he went to what passes for a school in one of the camps and asked the question of the children there, what does America mean to you? The answer he got was, America is where the food comes from. That was in his words quite a moving moment for him, and that is one of the messages that we would hope to leave here today, and that is, food is moving into Afghanistan.

At the risk of giving a commercial here, the World Food Program has done an absolutely magnificent job of moving food into the region. Currently, the major obstacle to the final distribution of that food is the security situation and, as you point out, Senator, that is something that has got to be better and got to be clarified.

If I may just throw out a few numbers here, the World Food Program monthly requirement for the entire country is 52,000 metric tons. This last 30-day period is the first time ever that that goal has been met. So far, halfway through the month of November, World Food Program has moved 30,000 metric tons of food. Before November, the most they had ever moved was 29,000 metric tons for a whole month, and that was in October.

So they are doing an astounding job of moving the food. The issue is, once the food is in the area, how do you get it precisely

to the areas of most need, and that, of course, is a function of the security situation. The question of what change has occurred because of the dramatic events of the weekend and subsequently, the most obvious example of what is changing is the Friendship Bridge at Termez. The situation there, as we understand it, is the bridge is not open.

Senator WELLSTONE. Is not open.

Mr. McCONNELL. Is not open. The reason it is not open is that there has not yet been a U.N. assessment done of the roadway between Mazar and the border, and as we understand it, that assessment will inform the Uzbek Government and hopefully encourage them to make their final decision to open the bridge at long last.

I would emphasize that yesterday the first barge did, in fact, move. It was very lightly loaded, 50 metric tons, mainly of nonfood items. The river is quite low. They were being cautious in this first barge about making sure it did not run aground. Yesterday it went without problem. It is about a 18-kilometer ride on that barge from one port to the other.

Today a second barge has, in fact, made that round trip, this time 200 metric tons of food, and so barge traffic has begun. We are hopeful and optimistic that the real key to the north, which is to say the opening of the bridge, will occur early in the week. The U.N. intends to run this assessment mission over this weekend.

Senator WELLSTONE. Mr. McConnell, before we go on, just since there are a number of people here in the audience, maybe you could explain—sometimes those of us who are very focused on this, we get it at a micro level. Maybe you could put this in just a little bit broader context as to the importance of the Friendship Bridge and the food coming in from the north, and getting the approval of the Uzbek Government, because this is one of the more positive developments, that we can now bring in a lot of food from the north.

Maybe you could kind of spell out what is going on here, and also with the barge traffic, why this is such an important development, and why we need to do this, if you could just embellish that point a little bit.

Mr. McCONNELL. Yes, sir, I will. The World Food Program surveys show that the areas in most need in Afghanistan are in the north. Traditionally, food has come in from the south, southeast kind of access. What is key to getting to the people in the north, those in most need, both because of geography and climate and Taliban misrule, the key to that is the so-called Friendship Bridge, where some estimates are—remember, I gave the number of 52,000 metric tons a month will feed the country. Some estimates are, half of that could come across this bridge.

I have not been there, but I am told it is quite an enormous structure, and this was used by the Soviets for entry and subsequent exit from Afghanistan.

Senator WELLSTONE. And again, we have every reason to believe the Uzbek Government will open it up, I gather, right? You are optimistic that they will? That is what we are waiting on. It is U.N. assessment, but then the Government to give its approval. Can we expect that to happen soon?

Mr. McCONNELL. I think so. It is more of a State Department question than one for us, but the concern the Uzbeks have expressed all along has been the security situation south of the bridge, and that is why I say that if this assessment mission can give those assurances, we would expect that the Uzbek Government would follow through.

Senator WELLSTONE. Well, we will move right to Mr. Kreczko. Alan, thank you for being here.

**STATEMENT OF ALAN KRECZKO, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. KRECZKO. Thank you, Senator. Let me thank you for convening another hearing on the subject, and express my appreciation for the support this committee has shown for a robust humanitarian response in Afghanistan, which, as you know, has been a major component of President Bush's response to the situation in Afghanistan.

I also wanted to say that we agree with most of the points that you identified in your opening comment, including the need to seize on the opportunity that is presented by the changed security circumstances to get as much assistance in as possible, in particular in the north, where the need is the greatest, and that is what Bernd McConnell and USAID are working so hard on.

We also agree on the need for the Northern Alliance to avoid human rights abuses and interference with relief efforts. We agree on the need for a reconstruction effort, and the U.S. and Japan will be hosting a meeting November 20 in Washington on reconstruction. The aim is to seek agreement in principle on a multiyear, multinational, multibillion reconstruction effort, and we agree on the need for there to be a broadbased representative government in Afghanistan, so on all of those fundamental points that you made we agree.

Senator with your permission, I would just say a few things about the refugee situation and how it has changed since we last had an opportunity to brief the committee on that. Overall the number of refugee flows to neighboring countries has remained relatively small, far fewer than had been originally feared. You remember, people were talking about 1.5 million new refugees. The United States has continued to urge countries to maintain an open border for those who need to flee persecution or conflict, but it remains the case that all of the countries maintain an official posture of a closed border to refugee flows.

As in October, there have been no significant refugee flows toward the northern border with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. There have been increased flows since we last talked toward Iran. Several thousand Afghans may have entered illegally, and there have been some reports of forced deportations by Iran back into Afghanistan.

Two camps were established by the Iranian Red Crescent Society for Afghans moving toward Iran, but they were established on the Afghan side of the border, and we understand that the Iranian Red Crescent Society withdrew their support from one of those camps

because the Taliban moved armed elements into it. That camp is now in an area controlled by the Northern Alliance.

Iran has done some more contingency planning with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees for future refugee flows, and has identified some sites for refugee camps that are on the border, but none of those are opened at this point.

Pakistan remains the destination of choice for most people seeking to leave Afghanistan. Pakistan generally maintains a closed border to refugee flows, but has made exceptions for certain vulnerable individuals. Roughly 4,000 individuals have been provided assistance at a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees transit facility in the southeast, and those people are now being moved to a new camp in Pakistan that the Government of Pakistan has allowed to open.

While the number of legal entrants to Pakistan has been small, the estimates of those who have entered unofficially has grown from the 10 to 20,000 that I mentioned to you last time to about 135,000 now. Those individuals have generally gone to live with relatives or friends and receive little assistance from the international humanitarian community.

Similar to the Iran situation, some camps have been set up on the Afghan side of the Pakistani border. The Taliban has been directing people to these camps, and some assistance has been provided in these camps, but the United States has not supported the establishment of these camps out of concern that they are subject to Taliban control and do not provide adequate security to refugees or to assistance workers.

The extent of future refugee flows is uncertain. It is too early to conclude that there will not be additional numbers. Nonetheless, with our encouragement, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has shifted to planning, as well, for the return of refugees to Afghanistan. We encourage this planning. The return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons needs to be a central element in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kreczko follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY ALAN KRECZKO, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

President Bush is providing firm leadership in the international campaign to eradicate terrorism worldwide. A key part of his efforts is directed at both the immediate and the longer-term problems plaguing the people of Afghanistan, and on this front, too, the United States is providing leadership.

Compassion is an integral component of the President's foreign policy, and it motivates America, even in these trying times, to lead the international humanitarian relief effort for those most vulnerable in Afghanistan. As the President asserted, "We have no compassion for terrorists, or for any state that sponsors them. But we do have great compassion for the millions around the world who are victims of hate and oppression—including those in Afghanistan. We are friends of the Afghan people. We have an opportunity to make sure the world is a better place for generations to come."

The President, on October 4th, announced a \$320 million initiative to provide additional humanitarian assistance for Afghans—for both those inside Afghanistan and for those who flee Taliban oppression to neighboring countries. The United States has consistently been the largest donor to international humanitarian efforts. With vital help from a number of countries around the world, our goal is to alleviate the suffering that Afghans have endured for more than two decades, as a result of war, severe drought, and the brutal, repressive rule of the Taliban regime.

The United States believes that all of Afghanistan's neighbors should be prepared to accept new Afghan refugees as needed, and that the international community must be prepared to shoulder the economic costs incurred by the flight of desperate Afghan people. In working with neighboring countries on potential new refugee flows, we need to take into account the existing refugee situation. Over 3.5 million Afghan refugees already reside in neighboring countries. The bulk of those are in Pakistan, which generously has taken in some 2 million refugees, and Iran, where some 1.5 million Afghan refugees reside. As with its contributions to relief efforts overall, the United States has consistently been the largest financial donor to support those refugees. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the remarkable generosity of Pakistan, Iran, and other neighboring countries in providing relief and refuge to so many Afghans for nearly two decades.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees originally prepared contingency plans for the arrival of as many as 1.5 million additional Afghans in the countries neighboring Afghanistan. Based on information available at the time of their original plan, UNHCR estimated an additional 1 million Afghans would arrive in Pakistan; 400,000 in Iran; and 50,000 each in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Those were planning figures, and the actual flow of new refugees has been much smaller. UNHCR estimates that 135,000 Afghans have found their way across the border into Pakistan since September 11, significantly fewer than originally anticipated. Possible reasons include: the international community's ability to deliver continued assistance inside Afghanistan; Taliban restrictions on male departures; the focused nature of the U.S. military campaign; and the fact that the borders of all neighboring countries are officially closed. There has been no significant population movement to the North, toward the Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan have, nevertheless, engaged in some contingency planning with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and have agreed to facilitate cross-border assistance to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has agreed to the prepositioning of relief material at Termez, and has now allowed relief material to move from barge to Afghanistan.

Iran also maintains a closed border. Reportedly a few thousand Afghans have entered Iran in the past several weeks, some of whom may have been deported back into Afghanistan by Iran. The Iranian Red Crescent Society had established two refugee camps inside Afghanistan, with about 8,000 to 10,000 Afghans there. However, we understand that the Iranian Red Crescent Society withdrew from one of those camps because Taliban armed elements entered it. That camp is now reportedly in the control of the Northern Alliance. Iran has done contingency planning with UNHCR for larger flows of refugees, and has identified some sites for refugee camps along its border with Afghanistan. Iran also is facilitating cross-border assistance into Afghanistan.

Pakistan officially maintains a closed border with Afghanistan, fearing that an open border and the prospect of relief inside Pakistan could attract hundreds of thousands of new refugees, with attendant security and economic implications for Pakistan. Pakistan has allowed some vulnerable groups to cross the border, and acknowledges that tens of thousands more have crossed unofficially. With Pakistan's authorization, UNHCR has established a transit center near the Quetta border crossing, where initial assistance can be provided to new arrivals who are permitted official entry. UNHCR has begun to move Afghans from the temporary receiving centers at the Quetta crossing in the south—to new refugee camps. Those who enter unofficially receive little assistance and fear deportation if discovered. Pakistan has identified sites where UNHCR can establish new refugee camps, although the site locations are in remote areas and security of humanitarian staff there will be a great concern. UNHCR has prepositioned substantial relief materials in Pakistan. Camps have been set up on the Afghan side of the Pakistan border, where individuals denied entry to Pakistan are getting some minimal assistance. However, we are concerned that these camps are subject to Taliban control and do not provide adequate security to refugees or to assistance workers.

The extent of future refugee flows will be affected by the same factors that currently appear to be limiting outflows and, of course, how the military campaign unfolds. Recent successes by the Northern Alliance has changed the dynamic within the country and could provoke new refugee outflows, especially by those sympathetic to the Taliban. We will continue to work with UNHCR, relief organizations, and with Pakistan and other neighboring countries, to prepare for possible increased refugee flows.

Our ultimate hope, of course, is that Afghans will be able to return to their homes. We have—despite the current fluidity of the situation—seen the voluntary return of almost 3,000 Afghans from Iran to Afghanistan. Afghans in Pakistan are following closely the events in Kabul and other parts of the country, calling rel-

atives, and thinking about testing the waters for return. While continuing to prepare for refugee flows, UNHCR has therefore begun to prepare for the possible return of refugees to Afghanistan. We encourage this planning. The return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons needs to be a central element in the planning for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The United States supports a broad-based representative government. We support the inclusion of Afghan women in the planning and future reconstruction of Afghanistan. We support their full participation in the economic, political and social life of Afghanistan. Promoting human rights in Afghanistan, and particularly the rights of women and girls, is a high priority for the United States. We have repeatedly called on the Taliban to lift restrictions on access to health care, employment, mobility, and education of women and girls.

On October 5th, the UN convened in Geneva a meeting of major donors, as well as Iran and Pakistan, to discuss the Afghan humanitarian situation. Attendees at this meeting praised President Bush's initiative and strongly endorsed the view that the international community should make maximum effort to provide assistance inside Afghanistan, so that people would not be forced to leave in search of aid. The meeting also endorsed contingency planning for refugee flows, and provided assurances to Pakistan and Iran of burden sharing to care for all new arrivals. Total offers of humanitarian assistance from over 40 countries—including President Bush's pledge of \$320 million—now total some \$800 million. For UNHCR, initial cash receipts were slow to match pledges, but now (November 15) the refugee organization has received \$57.6 million, of its \$268 million request for the six months from October 2001 through March 2002. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has contributed \$14 million of that amount, part of the Bureau's contribution of over \$36 million to the current Afghan crisis.

The unambiguous message of that meeting was support for the Afghan people. That certainly represents the attitude and endeavors of the United States as well. We are not at war with the innocent people of Afghanistan, and we are doing all we can to ameliorate the conditions under which they have long been suffering.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you. Just real quickly, Mr. Kreczko, I appreciate the agreement and the work that you are doing. Again, on the economic reconstruction, I was pleased to hear you say that we are really trying to organize the international community.

I think, again, sometimes you know, these economic reconstruction plans, they stay abstract for too long. I think we are going to need to get some action on the ground soon and some money on the ground soon, because again I think you have got this vacuum where all sorts of people are going to be dealing with all sorts of people, and I think it is real important that we are there.

One very just quick comment, at the very end of your testimony you talked about repatriation, and I am going to come back with a question and ask you how we are going to deal with a lot of people who I would guess are going to want to be coming back, or going to be coming back. They are not going to be waiting for any official blessing to do so, and so I would be interested in your plans there.

The other thing I want to talk about is, I know that the Pakistanis have opened up another camp, but it is in pretty awful conditions. I mean, it is remote. There is no access to water. I would like to talk a little bit more about that and try and figure out exactly what kind of discussions we have had with the Pakistanis on the border crossings. Are we encouraging them to open up the borders, or are we not now, not knowing whether they are Taliban? I would be interested in that discussion as well.

Mr. Rogers.

**STATEMENT OF LEONARD ROGERS, ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. ROGERS. I would just like to make a few brief comments. As Bernd said, the Administrator submitted our written testimony, but I think it is important to understand the context in which we are going to have to assess this humanitarian operation in Afghanistan and also plan for the reconstruction.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. UNICEF estimates that even in a normal year 300,000 children die from preventable causes, and that nearly half the children in the country have malnutrition, so it is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is also in the grip of a 3-year drought. There is nothing we can do except hope that the rains come normally, but if that drought persists into the next year, then the reconstruction is going to be hampered severely.

Many of the poorest people have lost all their assets. Their livestock herds have been liquidated. People have no ready source of income, as you suggest, and it is going to be important to get people back to work earning income so they can buy food in normal commercial markets.

Afghanistan has had 22 years of brutal conflict. There are 4 million refugees outside the country, and Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, so security is going to continue to be a major problem.

The President has provided significant resources for the humanitarian effort. USAID is responsible for managing \$192 million of that. Together with assets from USDA, we believe that is going to allow us to provide approximately 400,000 tons of food. Some of that food is already in the country. That volume of food will allow the United States alone to feed 4 million people through spring.

We are welcoming other donors' contributions which are now coming in at a reasonably strong rate, so we believe that the resources are either in hand or coming onstream to allow an effective humanitarian response.

I would be happy to answer your questions.

Senator WELLSTONE. Well, thank you for your testimony.

First of all, on the package, the \$320 million, one of the things again I want to repeat, it is past history now, but for a while OMB was too slow in getting this money out to people on the ground, and I want to emphasize at this hearing just as a matter of record I know that a number of Senators had to contact them, and I just hope we will not have any more problems with delay.

Of the \$320 million committed by the administration, what portion of these funds—this could be for any of you—will actually flow inside of Afghanistan as opposed to the maintenance of the refugee populations in neighboring countries? Do you have any sense of that?

Mr. KRECZKO. Well, Senator, it is hard to answer that with precision for the following reason. We know how much money was apportioned to our respective accounts, which is \$125 million came to the State Department refugee account, and the remainder went to AID, but our money will basically follow the refugees, so if the ref-

ugees return to Afghanistan we will be using our money inside Afghanistan to help with the return and reintegration of Afghan refugees.

If more Afghans leave Afghanistan to go to Pakistan, then our money would be used there, so it is kind of refugee-specific, but whether it is spent inside Afghanistan or inside Pakistan depends upon events.

We also use a significant chunk of our money to support the International Committee of the Red Cross, because that is our statutory responsibility, and that is activities inside, so I am afraid it is not as easy to define it with precision.

Senator WELLSTONE. Mr. McConnell.

Mr. MCCONNELL. It is also important to remind ourselves that the Presidential initiative was a regional initiative. The drought that has been described is not peculiar just to the northern part of Afghanistan. Tajikistan is suffering as well. Part of this money is being used to address some of the food needs there.

Senator WELLSTONE. Well, God knows, I am not trying to play off one group of desperately poor people against another, but I would find it hard to believe that probably you are going to get more people trying to leave to go to Pakistan. My guess is you are going to have people starting to come back, and moreover, the people in Afghanistan, this has been like—they have kind of been living a nightmare, so there is all sorts of needs there, dire needs, and so the people who could not leave in the first place were the elderly, the infirm, the poorest of the poorest of the poor people, and so I guess what I would want to do is just emphasize that we make that a priority, the internally displaced people in Afghanistan. I gather there is no disagreement on that.

Mr. ROGERS. I think the simple answer would be that of our \$192 million, excluding the \$20 million that will be used for food in Tajikistan, virtually all of that will go inside of Afghanistan, and a significant share of the PRM budget will ultimately wind up in Afghanistan as well, so I think the priorities are definitely on assisting inside Afghanistan.

Senator WELLSTONE. Well, I am glad we have that on the record. Thank you.

Just to go back to Friendship Bridge one more time, if I understand this the right way, we have got a changed security situation in the north. I mean, the Taliban are no longer in charge, so those considerations are no longer paramount, is that right?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, sir, but the security assessment that is being anxiously awaited here will also look for evidence of mining on the roads, but as far as active Taliban involvement, it is our belief that is gone.

Senator WELLSTONE. And again, the point being it is a dramatically different situation, so hopefully the Uzbek Government, after we get the security assessment, should be able to grant approval for use of that bridge. Talk a little bit about the differences it would make having to do it just with barge traffic, the bridge versus the way we are doing it now, just so, again, people can have an understanding of why we keep talking about Friendship Bridge, just what the difference would make in concrete terms. Right now,

we are doing it how, we are just doing it on the river, across the river?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Even the barge traffic is in a way a breakthrough. That has just begun, and that is a lot better than before. We are conducting in some areas airlift of food, to get food to the, sort of the gaps, the places where we do not have food coverage.

What this will mean, again, is an unfettered movement through the Friendship Bridge will essentially provide half the needs of the country, needs as defined by those people in most need, those people who are in the most inaccessible areas.

I would like to go back one more time, the World Food Program [WFP] is doing a superb job in getting food to the area. The issue is reorienting the food distribution to the north, which as you have pointed out is the area of most need. Friendship Bridge is key to that. We do not want to do airlifts. It is expensive, it is inefficient, and it takes resources away from the basic needs. This will allow us to use a well-developed road network in the north that is so far proving to be perhaps a little better than we had thought in terms of year-round capability.

Senator WELLSTONE. Senator Lugar, I would just ask one more question and then shift to you. Thank you so much for joining us.

The questions I asked, I was wondering what portion of the \$320 million was going to be committed to actually flow inside of Afghanistan versus care and maintenance of the refugee populations, and the reason I ask the question is because I think a lot of people are going to be coming back, and I also think, among the elderly and poorest in Afghanistan, it has sort of been their living hell.

And then the second question I was just asking was about Friendship Bridge, and when we could see that opened up, because that is going to make a huge difference coming over from Uzbekistan.

I guess my last question is, what do you all think would be required from a security standpoint to reintroduce international staff in the required numbers into Afghanistan? How quickly might this happen, and in what regions of the country?

Mr. MCCONNELL. This weekend a U.N. team is going into Kabul itself. The intent is, well, to look around obviously, but the intent is, we are told, to leave a staff of 10 behind in Kabul. Feyzabad in the north, the U.N. intended—and I do not know whether this occurred or not—to put their first staff in today on the ground. Mazar is a big question mark because of some security concerns and some of the reports you alluded to earlier, and so I think everybody is anxious to get the internationals back in as quickly as possible. We ourselves would like very much to get somebody on the ground to do some assessing for ourselves, and we are attempting to attach ourselves to one or two of those missions.

Senator WELLSTONE. Let me send it over—Senator Lugar, first of all I cannot tell you how honored I am that you are here. You are really probably one of the three, four, five Senators who have been most engaged in international affairs with the most sophistication in the U.S. Senate, and the other thing that we have administration witnesses and then we have a report from people on the ground in the second panel.

The other question I raised, and then I am going to send it over to you, I said earlier when I asked the question that I thought today is not too early for us to put together this economic reconstruction plan, because I think that it is going to be of key importance.

A lot of people are going to be wandering all around there. A lot of people are going to be making deals. A lot of people do not believe, given our history, that we are going to follow through, and I think we really need to be talking about all the infrastructure developments, and I especially think it would be a wonderful message to the Pashtun in the south to see that happening in the north right now, and that was the other thing we had talked about.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for my tardiness. Senator Wellstone has been holding the fort here and others of us have been over with Rich Armitage and Paul Wolfowitz and Steve Hadley thinking about the situations they brought to our attention.

Let me just pick up, however, on Senator Wellstone's point, and that is that a fairly large sum of money is going to be required, almost an endowment of this process. We have no idea how long military action will proceed in Afghanistan, but hopefully the attention of the American public and our Government officials will last longer than that. We must identify the resources in advance, not only from ourselves, but also our partners, would seem to be essential, an international fund-raising effort.

I am certain this is part of your portfolio now to identify who is prepared to step up for the long term with substantial funds.

I just want to follow through a specific aspect of this, just to get a feel for how you envision the organization of this effort. Until fairly recently, a number of our friends abroad were advising us that, given what they felt was the halting nature of military operations, that we should stop the bombing during the holy days and perhaps utilize that period for some international relief to show our goodwill.

This was rejected by our military people and others, but at the same time, everyone realized that the problems of winter and the difficulties were likely to be substantial.

Now, that has not all changed, but nevertheless the on-the-ground situation in the country has changed, remarkably, in a week. The bridge that Senator Wellstone was talking about from Uzbekistan into Afghanistan is apparently open.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Senator, everybody desperately wants that bridge open, but our information is that Uzbekistan has not yet agreed to open it. This weekend, a U.N. assessment team will make the run from Termez up—I am sorry, from Mazar up to hopefully form a decision, a positive decision by the Government of Uzbekistan to open the bridge, hopefully next week.

Senator LUGAR. In other words, the bridge is physically OK, it is the diplomatic situation.

Mr. MCCONNELL. And I think this team will certify that physical OKness, but it appears to be OK to us.

Senator LUGAR. Well, let us say we have good fortune and that works out, is it true that a thousand metric tons of wheat can come across the bridge every day?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, sir.

Senator LUGAR. That would be your plan, would it not?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, sir. The working number is 25,000 metric tons a month will come across that bridge.

Senator LUGAR. Now, just in terms of what happens to that wheat, is it literally in the form of wheat, or is it flour, and how, depending upon what it is, do you get it in some other form, and what is the distribution network? How does it reach people?

Mr. MCCONNELL. It will reach people in basically the same way as it does now. World Food Program will get the wheat into the country. The NGO's, the very fine NGO's and PVO organizations that have been doing such an incredible job inside will then do the physical distribution. It is preferable that be done by truck.

The bridge that we are all so fond of here is sort of the giant funnel into the north, and I think we are all agreed that the north is the area of most need. The World Food Program surveys identify it as such, and the road system that we are aware of is such that those trucks will be able to feed that half of the country very efficiently.

I ought to say that it is not the only route. The central highlands, the Hazarajat, is an area, too, of great inaccessibility and great need. The World Food Program is, again, even now, without that bridge being opened, able to, from newly liberated, apparently, Kabul, bring food in, and there is almost 13,000 metric tons of food aimed at the central highlands today, out of a, in order to get through the winter, requirement of maybe 30,000 for that whole area.

So there are good news parts of the distribution, but I would certainly agree that the bridge is key to the northern area of most need.

Senator LUGAR. How do you arrive at the 30,000 figure, and how do you determine how much wheat is necessary for the number of people that are there?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will not pretend to be an expert, having been an employee of USAID for 6 weeks here, but the World Food Program, through people on the ground, conducts surveys to develop estimates and for the Hazarajat, that area of the central highland area, their conclusion is 30,000 metric tons will feed that population for the winter months, and we accept their calculation of that.

Mr. ROGERS. Senator, a rule of thumb we use at USAID is that 2,000 tons of grain will feed 1 million people for a year. You can push the math around a lot of ways, but that is a basic rule of thumb.

Senator LUGAR. That is a very useful figure to begin to quantify it physically, because you have got a thousand tons a day across the bridge when it is open, and you have now control of the area in a way that we did not a short time ago. That does not mean every pocket of resistance is gone, but the possibilities of reasonably peaceful distribution by the NGO's becomes a practical possibility.

Now, we do not have full control of the southern part of the country, and so that is another story, although we might in due course. Now, how do you get it into the south? Are there routes through Pakistan, then, that are more likely at that stage?

Mr. McCONNELL. Yes, sir, but the thing we have to remember—and again, I am going back to World Food Program, in their assessment of the country as a whole, whereas there might be hungry people in the south, they are not those that are most gravely affected.

I mean, there is food in the south. Yes, there is turbulence, but the traditional route through the Kabul area from Pakistan is certainly much more available to us now, or to the NGO's now than it was, but the critical need is in the north, and that is the significance of the new routes that are available. There is food in the south, and I think we will not see the difficulty there.

Senator LUGAR. Now, how have all these NGO's survived during this most recent period, or are they coming back in? I mean, are they now kind of liberated and can do their thing, or do they have to come in?

Senator WELLSTONE. Some of them are smiling. They are going to tell you, too.

Mr. McCONNELL. Better the people who do the heavy lifting tell you, sir, but the expatriates have been out for sometime. They are jumping at the bit to get back in, and I think you will hear about that in the next panel.

Senator LUGAR. I will not jump ahead in the story. I appreciate your testimony. Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. I do, too. Thank you, and tell Administrator Natsios we appreciate his cooperation and effort to be with us, but I think, Mr. McConnell, we heard a lot from you. Thank you so much.

Let me call now George Devendorf. We are going to start with George out of deference, so he does not fall asleep, and Mark Bartolini, and Joel Charny.

We will start with George Devendorf, who, as I said, just got back last night from the region. George.

**STATEMENT OF GEORGE DEVENDORF, DIRECTOR OF  
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS, MERCY CORPS, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. DEVENDORF. Senator, thank you very much. Thank you in particular for your leadership over these several months on this very important issue.

As the Senator mentioned, I just returned last night from about 10 days in the region. I was visiting with our staff and our operations in Pakistan, both in Islamabad and in Quetta, in Beluchistan, where I had the opportunity to visit a number of the new refugee camps which have been established over the last couple of weeks near the border crossing between, the Chaman border crossing heading up into Kandahar, and as you might imagine, and as you have heard from us and others for some time now, the sites which have been identified for these new refugee camps are inhospitable, to say the least. Nonetheless, you and agencies and NGO's are doing the best they can, along with Pakistani authorities, to

provide at least the minimum requirements for the families which have come across.

I would point out these families have come, we have found, from all over Afghanistan, not just from the southern regions, but from Herat, from Mazar, even from areas around Takar, and so they really represent a very wide variety of ethnic groups and geographic areas and so forth. What they have in common, clearly, is they have just about nothing left, and that is why they have come across.

So that said, I know for weeks now and for several months, in fact, Mercy Corps and her colleague agencies have been trying as much as possible to highlight the need for a significant amount of resources to be made available to help respond to what are extremely broad and severe humanitarian needs inside Afghanistan today, without at all trying to diminish the validity of that argument.

What Mercy Corps would like to do, and what we tried to do in the prepared statement for today, is to try to look ahead a bit. We do not think it is too early, particularly with the events of the past week and the dramatic changes in the geography of the humanitarian effort inside Afghanistan, to really start thinking about what we can do now, and how we can perform now in such a way that it will more easily and more coherently lead to the revitalization of Afghan society, and what I would like to highlight in particular is the role that the market can play in that revitalization.

I have attached to our statement for today a photograph, again a relatively simple example, but nonetheless a photograph which was taken by our staff members on Monday in Taloqan. This is 2 days after the Norther Alliance forces had reentered that city.

That city is traditionally the hub of economic activity in that sort of north central region between Mazar and the far east end of the north of Afghanistan, and what it shows quite simply is a market vendor doing his work, and what we found is that even during the heaviest periods of fighting during the last 2 months, by and large markets have continued to operate. Beyond that, the halala system of informal cash transfers, the system inside of Afghanistan that enables economic opportunities and activities to go on is once again working in many areas.

What we would propose is that whenever possible, let us look toward revitalizing economic opportunities and economic activity inside the country as a primary way to help meet the supply needs. Whether it be food, rebuilding necessary—I should say, materials necessary for rebuilding, what-have-you, and there are things we can do to support that, then I would suggest we focus on that as much as possible.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Devendorf follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE DEVENDORF, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY  
OPERATIONS, MERCY CORPS

PRIORITIES FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN

*Introduction*

The stunning pace of the Taliban's withdrawal from many areas of Afghanistan over the past several days has lent considerable hope to the ongoing emergency hu-

manitarian effort in the region. With the rapid advance of opposition forces have come a number of positive developments that seemed quite unlikely only a few days ago. Several new access routes have opened up, international relief staff have been reintroduced in some areas, and limited numbers of internally displaced families are now beginning to return to their homes areas. This said, numerous challenges remain—challenges that will severely test the international community’s ability both to meet critical, life-saving needs during the winter, and to lay the foundation for the longer-term rehabilitation of Afghanistan, a process that will ultimately come to define the success or failure of the international community’s effort in Afghanistan. In this respect, the most difficult tasks still lay before us.

Mercy Corps, a non-governmental humanitarian organization, has been working in and around Afghanistan since 1986. In the coming months, we recommend that the following key considerations be taken into account as the US Government follows through with, and expands upon, its significant commitment to assist the people of Afghanistan.

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN THE REGION

##### *1. Demonstrate A Long Term Commitment to Afghanistan*

There is today inside Afghanistan an overwhelming sentiment among people of all ethnic groups that, after the Soviet occupation ended, the United States abandoned Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, many Afghans are uncertain about this government’s motivations and wonder what sort of commitment the United States will make to Afghanistan once Taliban forces have been defeated. The US Government has already made generous contributions to assist the people of Afghanistan—from the more than \$178 million that was dedicated to Afghan relief efforts during the last fiscal year, to the \$320 million in additional aid that this government announced during October. In order to safeguard these investments, and to successfully address the poverty and oppression that have directly fueled instability in Afghanistan in recent years, the United States and other donor governments should take this opportunity to make a firm, long-term commitment to help the people of Afghanistan. This commitment should be guided and informed by the considerations outlined below.

##### *2. Help Afghans to Help Themselves*

Humanitarian efforts, including those meant to provide urgently needed relief assistance, should be firmly based upon strategies that help Afghan families and communities to restore their productive capacities as quickly as possible—in short, to help Afghans help themselves. Massive amounts of both food and non-food aid are currently being assembled in the region. Given the scale and severity of relief needs inside Afghanistan, these commodities represent a necessary response that will form the backbone of the international community’s emergency assistance effort over the coming months. However, prolonged distributions of “free” food and non-food aid is clearly not in the best interests of the Afghan people. “Free” aid is, in fact, rarely free. Over time, it promotes apathy and a feeling of helplessness that directly undermines the sense of self-reliance and initiative that affected communities have traditionally relied upon. As a result, Mercy Corps strongly believes that free distributions of aid should be limited to immediate, life-saving efforts and that, as quickly as possible, humanitarian assistance should seek to promote the capacities of Afghans to reinvigorate their own society and economy. Towards this end, we would recommend particular attention be paid to helping Afghans revitalize both economic markets and individual livelihoods.

##### *3. Restore Livelihoods and Revitalize Markets*

In a small but significant way, the photograph attached to copies of this testimony serves to underscore the resilience of Afghan markets. Taken two days after the city of Taloqan fell to Northern Alliance forces, it depicts a small-scale vendor offering vegetables for sale on the streets of the city. Throughout Afghanistan, markets have continued to operate during the on-going conflict. Prices for most staple foods have increased, but not dramatically, thus indicating that economic supply lines have remained viable in many communities. In addition, the informal method of moving money into and around the country—the Hawala system—is once again working in several areas. These developments illustrate a simple fact—if the international community can help Afghan families to rebuild their asset bases and thus restore their purchasing power, the marketplace can and will provide much of what is needed in the way of food, non-food items, and reconstruction materials, etc. Mercy Corps therefore recommends that humanitarian efforts focus on interventions such as cash for work, access to credit, and infrastructure repair projects that target vital economic sectors, including transportation, agriculture, and livestock, etc. By re-in-

jecting cash into Afghan society through these means, aid agencies can help families and communities to more quickly regain self-sufficiency, and thus minimize their dependence on international aid in the years ahead.

#### 4. *Ensure Security for Humanitarian Operations*

Recent incidences of looting in Mazar and Kabul, among other places, underscore the need to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, facilities and operations. The United Nations and major donor governments should continue to impress upon both Taliban and opposition forces that they are directly responsible for the safety of relief workers operating in areas under their control. Towards this end, UN-sanctioned international military forces should be deployed as soon as possible to help ensure law and order until such time as a post-Taliban governmental structure is firmly established.

#### 5. *Don't Forget the Refugee Populations*

Even under the most optimistic scenarios, it will be months if not years before many of the nearly 4 million Afghan refugees in the region feel that it is safe to return to their homes inside Afghanistan. The United States and other major donor governments should ensure that sufficient resources are made available to assist these groups and that governments within the region do not adopt policies that force or encourage refugees to return home before it is clearly safe for them to do so.

*Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities. Mercy Corps has 15 years of experience in Afghanistan/Pakistan. This year Mercy Corps has assisted more than 500,000 people with drought relief and rehabilitation services, food aid, agricultural support programs, veterinary care for livestock, engineering and drilling wells, health, and sanitation projects. Since 1986, the agency has provided more than \$20 million in assistance to Afghanistan.*

Senator WELLSTONE. That is very helpful.  
Mr. CHARNY.

#### **STATEMENT OF JOEL CHARNY, VICE PRESIDENT FOR POLICY, REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. CHARNY. Thank you. I would like to echo the comments of appreciation for the work of this committee and the way you have been really providing leadership on the necessity of providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. I really do honestly believe, as an American citizen, that generosity of the U.S. in this crisis is exceptional. In a way, it has been ironically underplayed by the administration. To make a large commitment, as we did at the outset of this crisis, has been critical, and I think if we can stay the course and stay for the reconstruction phase, that will be extremely significant.

Many of the points that were made in my written testimony have already been discussed in some detail, so I will just highlight a few issues. One, on security, we have not really talked about the mechanics of how security should be provided at this stage. In other words, the issue is law and order, and Mazar-i-Sharif right now, the security situation is still very uncertain, and that begs the question of what options do we have to achieve security immediately so that the opening of the bridge between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan will really make a difference, so that whole northern tier can be reached.

It seems to us at Refugees International you have on the one hand the Northern Alliance perhaps could assure security. That seems to be rather dubious, given what has happened over the last few days, and the fact that they still have an ongoing conflict with the Taliban in the southern part of the country.

The second option is providing security under basically the mandate or rubric of the coalition itself, and I read today in one com-

munication that there is an idea being floated that maybe the French and the Jordanians, I assume with a coalition mandate, would go into Mazar and try to assure law and order in the short term.

The third option, which is the one that I think we would prefer, is to have a U.N.-mandated force, not a U.N. force, but one, as Ambassador Holbrooke, who is a member of our board of directors, as he argued yesterday in the Washington Post, the Security Council can mandate a force, a coalition of the willing, as it has been called, and I think the advantage is that if the Security Council does it, it gives a more international character to the operation, rather than relying on something that might be interpreted as unilateral.

The second point I want to make is to stress the importance of the commitment to reconstruction, and the fact that additional funding will be required beyond the \$320-million commitment. Refugees International is an advocacy organization. We are not an operational NGO, but I hope our colleagues who are operational can look forward to receiving funding for the reconstruction effort that will be badly needed.

Even with the gains on the ground, however, I do want to point out that this central highland area, the Ghor province in particular, the Hazarajat region, is still very vulnerable because of the onset of winter, and it still may be necessary to do airlifts into this region.

WFP is said to be organizing or preparing for these airlifts, and I just want to signal that it is really critical that we get an operational plan from WFP as soon as possible. In other words, do they really have the capacity to get food into this region in time. We do not want to rely on ground transport and hope for airlift plans only to find in December, well, sorry, we are not ready and it cannot happen. I think we need to get on top of this situation as soon as possible.

The fourth point I want to make is to point out—I know you are all sympathetic on this issue, but I have to point out the incredible irony of Taliban fighters crossing into Pakistan unimpeded, when refugees are blocked at the border. Unfortunately, this is typical in crises in the midst of conflict, but nonetheless, it is a stark irony that Taliban fighters with their guns can cross into Pakistan, but refugees with legitimate reason to cross cannot.

Finally, we are concerned that—

Senator WELLSTONE. Excuse me. Maybe you could tell me, why is this the case? It is counterintuitive when I first hear it. The Taliban cross with weapons, refugees cannot.

Mr. CHARNY. Well, I hope my colleagues agree, but I mean, basically there is a long history of partnership and collaboration along the border region between the Taliban and local commanders and local government officials on the Pakistani side, and when I was at the border crossing just a couple of weeks ago I was told unequivocally by U.N. workers, Bangladeshi U.N. workers who had been based in Kandahar, the Taliban were going back and forth, no problem, even at the end of October.

Now that the force is disintegrating and the Taliban may need shelter, they are going to get that shelter from commanders on the

other side that they have been collaborating with. That is the real life—I mean, that is the truth of what is happening in the border area, and we know that the crossing of refugees and the fear of large numbers was something that Pakistan was worried about from a political standpoint, that Musharraf did not want to jeopardize his standing with the Pakistani people, but it does seem ironic from a refugee rights standpoint that refugees cannot cross.

Finally, we are concerned about the situation for internally displaced people inside Afghanistan due to lack of access. Now that access is improving, it is critical that there be some central mechanism to get an overview of the situation for internal displacement. UNHCR has capacity that has been underutilized, because the refugee crisis that was predicted has not in fact taken place. It may be possible for UNHCR to provide leadership and even respond to the situation of internal displacement inside Afghanistan in cooperation with NGO's that they might wish to partner with.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Charny follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOEL R. CHARNY, VICE PRESIDENT FOR POLICY,  
REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

I want to thank Senator Wellstone and Senator Boxer for organizing this hearing on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and for inviting me to testify on behalf of Refugees International. I was recently in Pakistan, where I had the opportunity to monitor the situation in Afghanistan as viewed by the aid agencies based in Islamabad and to travel to the Afghan border at the Chaman border crossing with Pakistan. RI, which has been covering the humanitarian crisis in Central Asia for the past year, presently has an advocate in Peshawar, the other main border crossing point; he is monitoring the impact of current events on the movement of people in the eastern part of Afghanistan. My testimony will draw both on our experience on the ground and on RI's on-going analysis of the overall humanitarian situation in this highly complex emergency.

The capture of the northern half of Afghanistan is a military victory for the anti-Taliban forces that should translate into a much-needed humanitarian victory for the United States and others trying to fight famine and give hope to the Afghan people. Specific, immediate actions are required, however, to translate the recent military successes into humanitarian action that delivers assistance to Afghans in a timely and effective manner.

Aid agencies estimate that as many as 7.5 million Afghans will need food and other assistance this winter. Two decades of civil war, three years of drought and five years of repressive Taliban rule have made Afghanistan one of the world's most acute humanitarian disaster zones. Between four and five million people had fled the country as refugees or been displaced within Afghanistan before Sept. 11, and six weeks of bombing have increased the displacement.

Approximately 75% of the Afghan people afflicted by famine live in the northern half of the country, the area liberated by the Northern Alliance. Winter is closing in on much of this area, so there is literally a race against time and snow to get aid to vulnerable populations in the next few days and weeks.

Three steps must be taken now to head off a humanitarian disaster in northern Afghanistan.

First, Afghanistan's northern neighbors—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan—must move quickly to enable an increased flow of aid across their borders. These three former Soviet states tried to stop traffic to and from Afghanistan prior to September 11. After the attacks against the U.S. they started to allow aid to flow into Afghanistan, but the relief is not yet moving quickly enough. It is absolutely crucial that Uzbekistan open the Friendship Bridge that crosses the Amu Darya River between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The U.S. has been trying to secure access to the bridge for weeks. Now that the Taliban has been driven out of Mazar-i-Sharif, 40 miles south of the bridge, Uzbekistan has no excuse to keep the bridge closed. Andrew Natsios, the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, has just completed talks with Uzbek government in Tashkent about increasing the flow of aid, and RI hopes that his efforts will lead to a speedy opening of the Friendship Bridge.

If this bridge is open, the World Food Program says that it should be able to move at least 16,000 metric tons of food a month across the river—almost one-third of the food the WFP needs to move into Afghanistan each month—and much of this would reach Afghanistan's hungriest people. In contrast, with the bridge closed, food and other badly needed supplies have to be loaded onto barges on the Uzbek side of the border and then off-loaded onto trucks on the Afghan side. Further, due to the three-year drought, the Amu Darya River is so shallow that barges are limited to transporting small quantities of cargo in a single crossing. The sheer inefficiency of this operation would greatly reduce the amount of supplies that the World Food Program and other agencies would be able to ship into the famine-stricken northern central part of the Afghanistan.

Second, the security situation must improve. The withdrawal of the Taliban has so far not resulted in the establishment of a secure environment for the humanitarian relief effort, especially in Mazar-i-Sharif. Since its capture one week ago, conflict has continued in the city. UNICEF has reported that one of its drivers was killed in Mazar and WFP reports that 89 tons of oil, sugar and high energy biscuits were stolen from a warehouse there over this past weekend. Overall WFP reports that their food shipments across the border have slowed to a trickle in the past three days, underscoring the urgency of the need to establish law and order.

The situation in Kabul appears to be more stable and Mediciens sans Frontieres/Doctors without Borders announced two days ago that a four-person international medical team has returned to the capital for the first time since September 11. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also re-established its international presence in Kabul.

In the long, violent history of Afghanistan, murder and banditry often follow liberation. U.S. advisers working with Northern Alliance troops must discourage such lawlessness in the strongest possible terms. The question remains, however, whether the Northern Alliance has the capacity to provide security and establish law and order, especially given the need to continue to pursue remaining Taliban forces.

The options available to the international community to provide the security required to increase the strength and effectiveness of the humanitarian aid effort are limited. With time of the essence, RI believes that the best option is for the United Nations Security Council to authorize the deployment of police units and soldiers from Islamic nations that have expressed a willingness to serve in a peacekeeping capacity in Afghanistan. Countries believed to be interested include Turkey, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. Their duties should be focused primarily on establishing law and order in the capital and in provincial towns, such as Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat, that can serve as hubs for the aid effort. RI would like to stress that the world continually pays the price for the refusal of the UN and its major donors to establish a standing, well-trained police force that could move quickly to establish rule of law. Creating such a force should be a longterm goal. Now, the UN should identify a multinational force to establish secure and stable conditions so that aid agencies can do their work.

Third, the U.S. must accelerate the disbursement of aid funds and increase the amount of money it has set aside to support relief organizations working in Afghanistan. President Bush has pledged \$320 million for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Most of that money will go for the purchase of food, but about 10% is slated to support the work of relief agencies in Afghanistan. Until recently that money flowed slowly to the agencies, hampering their efforts to prepare for just the type of humanitarian opportunities that have resulted from continuing military victories. The disbursements began to accelerate last week after complaints from Senators Wellstone and Boxer, strong proponents of aid to Afghanistan. With more opportunities to deliver food, shelter, medical care and, eventually, educational services, the government should consider increasing funds for relief organizations. Even in the midst of this crisis, funds devoted to agricultural rehabilitation can start the process of achieving food security for many more Afghans. Educating Afghan girls and women, who were largely denied schooling by the Taliban, is essential if they are to play a role in the reconstruction of their country.

Prior to the recent military advances by the Northern Alliance, two locations in northern Afghanistan were of special concern. In Bamyan, Ghor, and eastern Badghis provinces snowfall and sporadic conflict will cut off 500,000 people by the end of November. *It is now too late to reach many of the affected communities by organizing overland distribution of emergency food.* In Jawzjan, Sar-e Pul, Balkh, and southern Samangan in the north central portion of the country the battle for the pivotal town of Mazar-i-Sharif limited humanitarian access throughout the region. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that there were some 500,000 internally displaced people in this region alone, many facing another winter without proper shelter.

If security can be rapidly established in the area around Mazar-i-Sharif the aid effort should be able to reach the vulnerable and the displaced in the north central region of the country. For the vulnerable people of the central highlands, however, winter weather is the main obstacle to humanitarian access and air transport is the only option to provide the estimated 20,000 metric tons of wheat required once overland shipment becomes impossible. The UN World Food Program (WFP) is organizing the logistics for air lifts into this region and is attempting to identify NGOs with provincial networks that might be able to assure adequate preparation of the landing sites and distribution to vulnerable people. The United States should press WFP to present its exact implementation plan to ensure that it is credible and will go forward on schedule. If WFP is not able to present a credible plan to get assistance into the central highlands, then other alternatives for air lifts may need to be considered, including the use of coalition or other military aircraft in support of a WFP-managed operation.

The focus on the wheat pipeline and the delivery of this staple inside Afghanistan, while fully justified, should not detract from the importance of other urgently needed items. Supplementary foods such as lentils, beans, oil, and sugar are also essential. Nonfood items such as blankets and shelter materials are needed to help vulnerable Afghans survive the bitter winter. With Afghan women experiencing the highest rate of maternal mortality in the world (860 per 100,000 live births, compared to 12 in the United States), RI wishes to highlight the availability of low-cost clean delivery kits, consisting of a plastic sheet, soap, and a new razor blade to cut the umbilical cord. These kits, available from the United Nations Population Fund, should be included in aid distributions to help reduce the terrible rate of maternal mortality in the near-total absence of a system of basic health care in rural Afghanistan.

The impact of the developments of the past week on the movements of displaced people and refugees is difficult to assess. The borders of neighboring countries continue to be closed to Afghans seeking protection and asylum. Since the outset of this most recent crisis, RI has continuously called for these borders to be opened, to no avail. Afghanistan's border with Pakistan is lengthy and porous and thus at least 135,000 Afghans have been able to cross the frontier illegally. These refugees, however, have no official status and very few of them can be reached by UNHCR and non-governmental organizations. Many are living with families in urban areas in Peshawar or Quetta, while others have managed to sneak into existing refugee camps where they scramble to obtain access to food and shelter. The apparent compromise achieved in late October between the High Commissioner and the Government of Pakistan to allow vulnerable people into the country on a temporary basis has so far not resulted in substantial numbers of Afghans being able to access protection and sustenance legally.

Reports today indicate that Taliban fighters have been crossing into Pakistan in large numbers with their arms. Thus, the Pakistani border is open to the Taliban but not open to legitimate refugees. This stark irony is typical of crises of displacement in the midst of conflict and underscores the political underpinnings of Pakistan's decision to keep the border closed.

Interviews in the past several days with Afghans who recently crossed into Peshawar in Pakistan indicate that they feel abandoned in Pakistan but are uncertain if and when security will permit their return. A number told RI that they left after their homes or fields were bombed; others left when they lost their jobs or means of livelihood. They gave the impression that incentives in the form of economic support or reconstruction assistance will be required for them to opt to return.

Since the start of the bombing campaign new displacement has primarily taken the form of people fleeing cities and towns, where the bombing had been most intense until the end of October, to the countryside, either to live with relatives or to find temporary shelter in their village of origin or other safe location. With almost all urban areas in Afghanistan now in the hands of the Northern Alliance, we assume that most of these people will now opt to return to their homes, if security can be assured. Along the border with Pakistan RI staff report that there are no longer large concentrations of displaced people. They may already have begun to return to their homes in the light of the changing military situation.

RI would like to underscore that it has been practically impossible to obtain an accurate and comprehensive picture of the situation for internally displaced people inside Afghanistan due to the lack of access. Now that parts of the country may become more secure, a strategy for identifying the location of the newly displaced and the scope of their needs is urgently required, followed by a rapid targeted response. To address the potential gap in providing this assistance, RI recommends that UNHCR, in cooperation with experience NGOs, should play the leading role in responding to their needs.

Hunger, poverty and lawlessness afflict Afghanistan, a country where hundreds of thousands of people could die of starvation and exposure this winter. The significant advances in the coalition military effort over the past week, while promising from a humanitarian perspective, do not in and of themselves create the security required to mount the effort needed to save lives. Urgent action is needed more than ever to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe for the Afghan people, who after two decades of suffering deserve nothing less than security and the means to survive.

Senator WELLSTONE. Mr. Bartolini.

**STATEMENT OF MARK BARTOLINI, VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. BARTOLINI. Thank you, Senators, for inviting me to present the International Rescue Committee's view on the crisis in Afghanistan. I particularly want to thank you, Senator Wellstone, for your really exceptional leadership on this issue.

A week ago, the International Rescue Committee—and Senator Lugar, you asked this question about what the NGO's were doing. We have been active in the region for 21 years. We have been in Afghanistan right after the Soviets left for about 12 years. We have about 1,500 staff that we work with through our local partners, and they really have been doing heroic efforts over the last 2 months. We do not have any expat staff in yet, but we probably will in the next few days. I know Mercy Corps and a few other organizations are going to send their expat staff back in.

A week ago we were working in all-Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan. We were in the north, the southwest, and the east. Today, we are working in no Taliban-held areas of Afghanistan. We are working in some areas in the east where it is hard to tell who is in control. Paktia and Lowgar are two regions which are too difficult right now to tell who is in control.

I want to touch on five areas that I think are critical, and one I hope the other panelists have touched on is access and security. While there certainly seems to be a very favorable turn in the situation, we are waiting for the situation to resolve itself. I spoke to our staff this morning up in Mazar-i-Sharif. It is very uncertain. There is still fighting going on.

We have been asked by the Northern Alliance commanders in the region to continue to suspend our operations until Saturday, while they set up a garrison, and they will put military forces in the region to try to create some sort of law and order, but it is still anybody's guess whether or not—the Northern Alliance obviously have some political imperatives to demonstrate that they can create a situation for humanitarian assistance to proceed and for law and order, but having been in these situations in the past, it is possible we will face harassment, bribes, many of the things we were facing under the Taliban, and for these reasons I would echo Joel Charny's call for some sort of multinational force to go into Afghanistan to assure that humanitarian assistance can continue.

Also, I think another critical dimension of this is the type of displacement that could occur, and this was a big fear of many Afghans. There was a fear of bombing, which made many flee, but there was also a fear of what would happen if the Northern Alliance moved back in. They have very stark memories of the early nineties during the civil war.

And through our work, especially in Eastern Congo, where we have done dramatic studies on the link between displacement and mortality, if we see this population in Afghanistan, which is so decimated, displaced in large numbers, we will see significant mortality, and I do not think we are out of the woods on the question yet, so we really think security is the key to this situation now.

Let me turn to the political equation, which is, of course, directly linked to this, and there is concern that events of the last week have outstripped the political process in terms of establishing a viable unity government, and we cannot stress too much the importance, we think, of moving forward on some sort of framework government that we can put in place as soon as possible to help stabilize the situation.

Third, I want to touch on something Senator Wellstone raised earlier, and that is resources. The U.N. appeal has been oversubscribed for the crisis in Afghanistan in terms of pledges, but there can be a difference between pledges and the actual contributions that arrive in cash, and so we cannot stress enough the importance of governments coming forward with their pledges and fulfilling them.

Also, there is still moneys out of the \$320 million supplemental that need to go through the appropriations process, and we would urge that that is streamlined as much as possible, because while there are, I think, sufficient resources for the short term, I think within a few months we are going to be looking at—out of this \$320 million we are going to need new resources to continue our work.

Fourth, I would like to touch on the issue of refugees, and there are some 4 million refugees scattered between Iran and Pakistan, and clearly there is an opportunity here to create an Afghanistan that these people can return to, and we all saw the dramatic repatriation in Kosovo, some 800,000 people. I do not think we are going to see the speed, because of the conditions inside of Afghanistan, that we saw in Kosovo, but certainly we can work quickly to try to effect that repatriation which will not only give these people who are living in really deplorable conditions, most of them, a new lease on life, but it will also, I think, go far to stabilize the region.

The other issue we have since this crisis began, we continue to call for open borders. We think that is crucial. It is mandated under the refugee convention and under international humanitarian law, but having said that, we also want to point out the danger, and I think it was—I am not sure if it was George or Joel who touched on this, but the danger of Taliban and their fighters crossing into Pakistan. We have been seeing that over the last few days.

In these tribal areas there are Pashtu, and they are going to be very sympathetic to the population, and they could be an extremely destabilizing factor in Pakistan, and so while we call for open borders, we also recognize—and this is very difficult to do. There are some 2,000 kilometers of border that Pakistan has with Afghanistan, but some sort of screening mechanism.

The camps that have been set up inside Pakistan in the northwest province frontier, frontier province, are very close to the border, within 10 kilometers. This really provides an ideal staging area for troops. It is one of the reasons that we have been opposed

to transfer of refugees out of some camps into these newer camps, aside from the fact that they are also very difficult to service.

Finally, let me touch on the long-term response. The withdrawal of the United States development assistance in the early 1990's was a contributing factor in the deteriorating conditions that led to the rise of the Taliban. To ensure that the massive efforts we currently have underway can be sustained, Congress will need to appropriate something on the scale that you are talking about, Senator, a dramatic economic package for the region. I think that is a really critical priority.

Rehabilitation needs include a health care system, the agricultural system, and we are not talking in some cases massive projects. Even on a very local level, a simple irrigation system at relatively minor cost, that could make a dramatic difference on the Afghans' ability to feed themselves.

We need to remove land mines. It is the most heavily mined country in the world. I had a report from our staff last week. We work in a camp up in the north, in Mazar-i-Sharif, called the Stoki camp. There is about 15,000 families in that camp. Six children went out—it has gotten very cold up there—went out to search for firewood. Three of them were killed when they stepped on a land mine, and the other three were severely injured. This is an unbelievably common occurrence in Afghanistan, so clearly mine clearance is one of the priorities.

Rehabilitating orchards. The livestock in the famine belt region in the northwest of the country, the people have sold virtually everything. They are literally eating grasses and roots. The livestock in some of these areas has been depleted up to 80 percent, and the livestock is critical to the economy of the region for farming, for their very livelihood. Seeds are going to be another critical need.

We did get some seeds up into the Mazar-i-Sharif area about 2 weeks ago. There was some rainfall, and so that was encouraging, but people have eaten their seeds. There is less than 10 percent of the viable seed left in Afghanistan. They are going to need massive seed programs come spring for planting.

Finally, after 22 years of war, as Senator Wellstone said, the Afghans deserve to live in an Afghanistan where they can feed themselves—we need to help them to do that—to live in safety, to educate their children, and to participate in society, no matter their gender, their ethnicity, or their religion.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bartolini follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK BARTOLINI, VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT  
RELATIONS, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to present the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) views on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, the IRC would like to express its deepest sympathies to the victims and their families of the 11 September attacks. These attacks, and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan which predated 11 September, are now inexorably linked. There is a clear imperative to prevent future attacks against civilians and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The methods the United States employs to meet these objectives defines us as a people. The President has stated that the Afghan people are not our enemy. The Administration and Congress have appropriated \$320 million dollars to respond to immediate humanitarian needs in the region. And the President has stressed that

the United States will assist Afghanistan over the long-term, helping the country rebuild after 22 years of war. In the final analysis, it will be the United States' adherence to these promises, and not any one action, that will determine to what extent Americans can expect to win the "hearts and minds" of the people of the region, and the extent to which, in this time of great national trial, we live up to our own highest ideals.

In my testimony today, I will provide a brief overview of the humanitarian situation and touch on five issues that are key to ensuring that the needs of the Afghan people are met.

#### OVERVIEW

The IRC implements programs in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In concert with local partner agencies inside Afghanistan, the IRC employs over 1,500 Afghans who are heroically endeavoring to assist 750,000 vulnerable individuals, 75–80% of whom are women and children. We are in contact with our staff on a daily basis from our office in Peshawar, Pakistan. In Afghanistan we are working in the North, Southwest and East, in a total of eight provinces, including the cities of Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Kabul and Jalalabad. We are distributing food, shelter materials, clothing, medical supplies as well as seeds, firewood, stoves and hygiene kits. Other sectors in which we work include health care, water and sanitation, education, agriculture and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Afghanistan suffers from one of the lowest rated indices for the human condition in the world. Prior to 11 September the World Food Program had identified some 5.5 million people in need of food aid. The infant mortality rate at 18% is the highest in the world. A quarter of all children die before they reach their fifth birthday. 1,700 mothers out of every 100,000 die in childbirth, life expectancy is 46. And approximately 90% of girls and 60% of boys that are of school age are affected by illiteracy. Many civilians, especially women, suffer from persecution and other violations of their human rights.

The country has suffered from 22 years of war and 3 years of a severe drought. Fighting and drought has internally displaced over 900,000 people, most having sold everything they owned before taking flight. Some have even sold their children seeing this as the only way for their children to survive. The drought has seriously degraded the condition of millions of civilians caught in this 22-year cycle of violence. Nutritional surveys reveal an increase in malnourishment with some areas approaching famine levels.

In parts of the "famine belt" 80% of herds of sheep and goats have died due to the drought. Farmers have been forced to sell or eat their seed for food. Crops have failed and not produced seeds. Only 10% of Afghanistan's seed needs are currently viable. Children can be seen pulling grasses and roots for food, at great personal risk as the country is littered with the largest concentration of landmines in the world. Just last week three children were killed and three injured by a land mine explosion as they searched for firewood outside of the Sakhi refugee camp near Mazar-i-Sharif.

The situation deteriorated even further after 11 September. In fear of coalition bombing and a power vacuum following a fall of the Taliban, Afghans fled the cities of Kandahar, Khowst, Kabul and Jalalabad. Taliban and lawless elements raided aid warehouses, stole vehicles, blocked convoys, demanded bribes and harassed staff. Given the displacement and disruption in food supplies, the World Food Program is now estimating some 7.5 million Afghans who are in need of food, clean water and shelter this winter.

Recent surveys inside Afghanistan revealed famine and pre-famine conditions in several areas of the country. And some refugees entering Pakistan have exhibited signs of severe malnutrition. Under such conditions people, especially children, succumb more readily to easily treatable diseases such as respiratory infections, vitamin A deficiency, measles and diarrhea. The harsh conditions of winter also will fall hardest on these vulnerable individuals.

Despite all these obstacles humanitarian agencies continue to work. In the last two weeks the level of aid reaching the most vulnerable populations was increasing. The World Food Program has set a target of 52,000 metric tons a month. Already in the first two weeks of November they have moved in 27,000 metric tons. In one area most in need, the Hazarajat, WFP has moved in 13,000 metric tons and the requirement for the entire winter is approximately 30,000 metric tons. The secondary distribution of this food to the beneficiaries will be done by NGOs like IRC still operating in Afghanistan. Supplementing these deliveries are NGOs who are contracting with local traders to bring food from neighboring countries into designated areas. Several American NGOs are just now ramping up their operations

after having received USG funding. Will it be enough? That is a very difficult question to answer, and is dependent on a number of variables. In all likelihood we will avert an escalating humanitarian crisis in some, hopefully most, regions of the country. But there still exists the very real possibility of changing conditions that will make access to some areas difficult if not impossible.

#### ACCESS AND SECURITY

The dramatic fall of Taliban-held areas over the past several days presents both opportunities and dangers. Our staff in Mazar-i-Sharif reported on Monday a chaotic scene with bodies in the street, revenge killings, and looting of aid agencies. Many IDPs have expressed fear that the country could return to the chaos and brutality that marked the civil war years of the early 90s.

Over the coming weeks the security situation will determine the success or failure of aid operations. Some agencies have already begun to return expatriate staff to Afghanistan. They are to some extent the "canaries in the mineshaft." The extent to which they can carry out their programs unhindered and in safety will determine how many more agencies are able to return staff and to what degree operations can continue to be expanded.

If the security situation allows, there are opportunities to do significant airlifts into the most vulnerable regions, including the Hazarajat and Mazar-i-Sharif. Convoys from the Central Asian Republics can better access vulnerable areas of western Afghanistan. Efforts should be redoubled to urge the Uzbek government to open the Friendship Bridge at Termez, a vital link to northwestern Afghanistan. One estimate is that up to 25,000 metric tons a month can cross that bridge, half of Afghanistan's monthly requirement. And as that bridge provides the most ready access to the north, where the need is greatest, its opening would be a significant boost to aid efforts.

With most of the significant vulnerable populations in the southwest and northwest falling out of Taliban hands, there is an opportunity to rapidly increase the level of aid reaching the most vulnerable populations. Steps should rapidly be taken to deploy a multilateral security force sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council to provide some level of security to territory now held by the Northern Alliance. Such a force could provide protection against ethnicity-based retribution, support a transitional government and protect against lawlessness and banditry that could potentially cripple aid efforts.

There is a danger that further displacement could occur if the security situation is not stabilized. In a population as stressed as that now found in much of Afghanistan, displacement will almost certainly lead to higher mortality rates. Epidemiological studies the IRC has conducted in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo expose a clear link between displacement and increased mortality. This has led us to prioritize our efforts to try and sustain people in their homes. And with the threat of bombing now over, this strategy becomes all the more imperative.

The severity of winter will also play a significant part in the humanitarian equation. It will determine access to many higher elevation areas and it will pose the additional requirements of providing shelter supplies and clothing to keep people alive. In the north, we are trying to provide IDPs with a three months supply of food so that they can return to their villages rather than try and survive in a rudimentary shelter or tent.

#### RESOURCES

The United States government, in combination with other donors, has contributed significant resources to address the short-term needs of the Afghan people this winter. The imperative now is to ensure that those resources arrive in a timely manner. Despite a United Nations appeal that has been oversubscribed, pledges do not always translate into actual contributions. There were some delays in getting the first tranche of money from the supplemental out to the agencies that needed those funds. The remaining supplemental funds for humanitarian response will need to go through the appropriations process. As with the first tranche, speed and flexibility of use will be key to ensuring they are most effectively spent.

#### THE POLITICAL EQUATION

There is concern that with the dramatic events of this past week, military action has gotten too far out in front of the political imperative of constructing a coalition government. The long-term success of this humanitarian intervention will largely depend on the viability of whatever coalition government is formed and the ability of such a government to act independently of neighboring states. The fact that this

process is still in its infancy, augers for the rapid deployment of a security force to ensure stability while this process moves forward.

#### REFUGEES

Pakistan and Afghanistan's other neighbors should respect the right of first asylum and allow refugees fleeing the conflict to cross their borders. Refugees should not be forcibly repatriated back to Afghanistan in violation of the Refugee Convention and international humanitarian law.

This being said it is important to point out a potential threat to Pakistan's security with respect to the border areas. The border with Afghanistan is roughly 2,000 kilometers long. Much of the border areas are "Tribal Areas" where the Government of Pakistan faces legal and political limitations in exercising its control. These areas are predominantly Pashtun. It is possible that Taliban and Arabs fleeing the south could be a destabilizing influence if they infiltrate these areas in Western Pakistan. For this reason, we see the need for careful screening at the border to ensure that Afghans entering Pakistan are bona fide refugees.

The new camps in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province are extremely difficult for aid agencies to work in. They are located in insecure areas, the water table is in some case over 1,000 feet down, they are close to the Afghanistan border, susceptible to manipulation both by tribal leaders and belligerents entering from Afghanistan. The United States should continue to advocate for their relocation with the Government of Pakistan and the UNHCR.

#### LONG-TERM RESPONSE

The withdrawal of United States development assistance in the early 1990s was a contributing factor in the deteriorating conditions that led to the rise of the Taliban. To ensure that the massive efforts currently underway are sustainable, Congress will need to appropriate further funds in order to address longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs in Afghanistan. Priority rehabilitation needs include rebuilding the health care system, reconstructing irrigation systems, removing land mines, rehabilitating orchards, increasing livestock, providing seeds, and assisting in education.

After 22 years of war, ten of which were fought with United States support against a brutal Soviet occupation, Afghans deserve to live in an Afghanistan where they can feed themselves, live in safety, educate their children, and participate in society to the fullest extent—regardless of ethnicity, religion or gender.

Mr. Chairman thank you for allowing the IRC to provide its views today before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you. Just superb testimony, and I just want to thank each of you for your wonderful work. People like you inspire me.

I have three questions. I will go through them quickly, then we will move to Senator Lugar. I was—I guess, Mark, you were the one that said this, and it got me thinking. Originally, and I want to talk, the recent press makes it appear as if, now that the Northern Alliance has taken back many key cities in the north, that the security situation is good and humanitarian relief will flow easily, and I want to ask you about the security situation on the ground and also your assessment of the Northern Alliance's ability to establish security and promote law and order, and then I want to add a couple of things.

Because of what you said, it sounds like a number of you have said already that we need some kind of U.N.-mandated force, not just for the sake of bringing the relief in, the humanitarian assistance in, but it seems like, Mark, what you said, I thought, was very interesting, which is that if we have a repeat of what happened before with the Northern Alliance, and you have all sorts of people fleeing the Northern Alliance, they are going to die, they are going to be internal refugees.

So let me get some sense of Northern Alliance has taken over these key cities, *ipso facto*, security situation is good, humanitarian relief will be able to flow easily, or what is your assessment of where we are at right now?

Mr. BARTOLINI. I think we are really in a waiting period right now. Clearly, the Northern Alliance has a political imperative to demonstrate that they can control the situation, but it is very unclear whether they will have the command and control down to their soldiers to actually effect that, and in Mazar-i-Sharif we saw aid organizations looted by the Northern Alliance. It was not just the UNICEF convoy. There were other aid organizations that suffered from this.

In Herat we have not seen that problem. It has been calm down there, but I think it is really too early, and clearly the government, the Northern Alliance has moved very quickly into Kabul. There is no Pashtun representative in this coalition, and I think that is going to create very serious security problems unless it is worked out quickly.

Mr. DEVENDORF. I would just echo that. It would indeed be truly ironic if, with withdrawal of Taliban from these areas, the international community was, in fact, not able to expand humanitarian assistance.

Senator WELLSTONE. George, to a certain extent—I know this will sound odd to some people, but to a certain extent you had some cooperation from some of the Taliban, did you not? I mean, I am not saying 100 percent, but is that not true, that you had built up some kind of working relationships with them?

Mr. DEVENDORF. Sure. Every agency that was continuing to run operations in Taliban-held territories had at least the acquiescence of those authorities, if not the outright support. What the Taliban brought to the areas which they controlled was law and order. It was a very severe form of that, but of course that has broken down in recent weeks, further complicating operations inside, and just the basic assurances that any agency would want to have before undertaking large-scale operations, simply to support what Mark was just saying, the Northern Alliance forces are the *de facto* responsible entities in the entire north of the country right now and, as such, I believe major governments and the U.N. should hold them responsible for the safety and security of the humanitarian operations ongoing in their areas.

We have seen a couple of examples where Northern Alliance forces have offered to safeguard or help provide protection to some humanitarian compounds. Of course, while that was going on, there were also lootings taking place of humanitarian compounds by Northern Alliance forces.

What is clear is that, more so than even any normal military force, the Northern Alliance is an alliance in name only, very disparate levels of command and control based upon the different individual personalities across their ranks, but again, I think that the same measures should be held with the Northern Alliance, and that is, are they cooperating and providing assistance, and if they are not, clearly we would seek the assistance of the U.N. and the major donor governments to try to encourage that as much as possible.

Senator WELLSTONE. And just a quick reaction from any one of you all, and then I will go to Senator Lugar, and I will put my last two questions together.

To me, in my mind there are three things to do, and I want this to be a working committee, and we want to be helpful, and one of them is working with our Government and from this committee as well to communicate a very emphatic message to the Northern Alliance that this is now your responsibility, to make sure that the relief work goes on and that people are to create the conditions on the ground for security so that this humanitarian relief gets to people. That is No. 1.

Second of all, to think about or to propose that we really do need some kind of, along the lines of what Richard Holbrooke was talking about, and what you have talked about, not an actual U.N. force, but a United Nations-sanctioned force, international force to go in to help create these conditions on the ground.

And then the third thing, everybody today, everybody has talked about the importance—and this is the first thing you started talking about—of reconstruction, that it is not too early for us to think about how we walk our walk when it comes to an economic reconstruction package, that that is terribly important for all sorts of reasons, so we do not repeat what we did in the past, because the people in Afghanistan deserve a different life than a living hell, and also, from very real politic reasons, as you have this huge vacuum, and all sorts of people are going to be wheeling and dealing in there, and people can go in any number of different directions, and this is going to have a lot to do with whether or not we can create the kind of conditions for stability.

Those are the three things to work on, at least as I see it.

Mr. CHARNY. That sounds like a good agenda. What I want to stress, because as you know, a lot of people in Washington get awfully nervous when you start talking about U.N.-mandated forces, I think what is needed immediately is basically police who can try and ensure stability and law and order in some of these key towns, so I do not want to raise the specter of 200,000 U.N.-sanctioned troops fanning out all over Afghanistan, because that is when people understandably begin to get nervous.

The idea is to either help the Northern Alliance assure security and stability, or, if they cannot do the job, replace them at the level of assuring basic law and order. Just to underscore the necessity of this, I heard an interview with the WFP spokesperson in Islamabad this morning, and he said that virtually no WFP convoys had crossed into Afghanistan in the last 3 days because of concern about the security situation, and so while the overall picture that Bernd McConnell painted is accurate, that major progress is being made, they have almost suspended operations in this uncertain time, and we just—we need every day. Every minute is critical to get food in and to get other supplies in in the coming days.

Senator WELLSTONE. Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you. I salute you, as the panelists have, for focusing our attention on this. Our powers, whatever they may be in this committee or in the Senate, are often what we are doing today, and that is trying to illuminate a situation and provide some

oversight but also a forum for people well-informed, as you are on the ground, and with associates.

There is a very steep learning curve for each one of us in the Senate, and to think through what is happening in the region as the Northern Alliance proceeded, toward Kabul, there was anxiety as to whether they should enter before the southern Afghans were to join them. On the other hand, anxiety was expressed, as to who will police the situation while the Taliban pulls out and before a new government is in place.

So apparently, some Northern Alliance people came into the city to hold things down to a dull roar. This created great anxiety with the Pakistanis, and as we heard President Musharraf and his press conference with President Bush describing atrocities in the past, and the reasons why Pakistan has great anxiety, but if not the Northern Alliance, who?

So the idea that Secretary Holbrooke has presented makes a lot of sense, but it requires some implementation. It would require our State Department and foreign ministers of other countries to coalesce with that suggestion, with Secretary General Annan or somebody to implement what we are discussing.

This is a public forum, with well-informed people attempting to get the word out, and an agenda that needs to be met. Meanwhile, as you have all suggested, because the policing powers are uneven, perhaps better in some places than in others, the problems for the NGO's or for those who are offering humanitarian relief are substantial. The risks remain even if the military situation is improving.

Our own military people are not in a position to do this job. They are at best auxiliaries to the Northern Alliance, or whoever is involved in ground fighting. Our forces pass messages back through the chain of command of what they observe, and that is helpful, and we found this with the testimony of Mr. Wolfowitz and Mr. Armitage and Mr. Hadley this afternoon, as the Senators queried them for the last hour and a half about all sorts of things, including the humanitarian situation, including this bridge and the wheat and so forth.

So for whatever comfort it may be, they are reasonably well-informed, but becoming more so because we are interested in this situation and continue to pursue it with the administration.

I suppose what I finally come to is, there is this whole problem of nation-building, who reconstructs, or who even constructs for the first time an Afghanistan that works. This is a situation in which there would be, ideally, some coalition of forces, who in the past have not moved along well, and in a country that, as you have described in the testimony today, with the highest infant mortality rate that I have ever seen—180 per 1,000, as opposed to 12 in the United States. This is an awesome dilemma, long before we got into the war, and nutrition problems likewise—5.5 million people I think one of you pointed out in your testimony, even pre-war, quite apart from this situation.

So whose responsibility is this? How does the world assist in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. There are a good number of Americans who feel that that is well beyond our ability, and furthermore,

many people in the rest of the world would agree we ought not to be the major factor, although a contributor to this.

Do you have any suggestion as to who does try to do the nation-building, who tries to bring together these coalitions of people who might be able to provide governance? How do we put this together in a fairly short period of time, so that there is some hope?

Our military objective is still al-Qaeda, and the terrorist cells. The Taliban came into this simply because they refused to cough them up. They were in the way, so they are paying the penalty for shielding the terrorists, but the military effort is the terrorists.

Now, the collateral damage is obviously the rest of the country, and the problem is how you continue to prosecute the war, and at the same time bring about some reorganization in the area that has been affected.

I am just curious, after this long preamble, whether anyone has some thoughts on this subject.

Senator WELLSTONE. That was a preamble well worth listening to.

Mr. DEVENDORF. If nothing else, I think it aptly summarizes just how complex this situation is, and Senator, in answer to your question, I wish I had a short one. What I can say is that I firmly believe that if the U.S. Government tries to take upon its shoulders the full weight of rebuilding Afghanistan, it will fail. There is no way around that. It will fail in humanitarian terms, economic terms, political terms.

Afghanistan has always been an area of the world adverse to centralized rule. It has long been the scene of conflict, both inter-cine and international. I do not think we can hope to change those overnight.

What the international community can do is play a supportive role, supportive in terms of our diplomacy and in terms of our economic strength, to assist Afghans to try during this moment, which is perhaps one of the most optimistic moments in Afghanistan's history, at a time when the international community is more than ever focused upon trying to be constructive and assist people in that region to help them move forward the task of identifying what sort of governmental structure it is that is going to work for their people in their area of the world.

Not necessarily to come with a preconceived notion of what that might look like, but be ready in good faith to meet good-faith efforts by the Afghan people and their leaders, both the current ones and those that we hope will develop in the current weeks and months and years, to reward them for honest progress made toward that objective.

Senator LUGAR. That is a very good point. This is a situation in flux now, because of these crisis situations. A year ago, the situation was very bad in terms of infant mortality, but it would have been totally inappropriate for us suddenly to decide in a hearing like this that Afghanistan has enormous problems and we ought to get in there and wrench it around.

But now, with the whole situation in flux, the international community in there, there are opportunities, even out of the crisis, to improve the situation for the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. CHARNY. To me, I have done a lot of work in Cambodia, where the international community faced not an identical but a similar challenge of reconstructing a country while reconstructing a viable political framework for the country to go forward, and I think, based upon my Cambodian experience, I would make a few points.

One is that it is not necessary for the political process and the reconstruction process to be lockstep together. There will be opportunities to do reconstruction work even before the political dispensation is clear, and I think we should seize those opportunities.

We have to be really patient on the political side. I mean, I have never in my career seen a country as riven and as politically complex as Afghanistan, and if anyone tries to play God and create a new structure that does not have the support of the Afghan people through a participatory process that includes women, that includes all ethnic groups, that government will fall so fast, no matter how much international support it has, so again, for what it is worth, and again in the spirit of almost having a seminar discussion, I advise incredible patience on the political side while seizing opportunities to rebuild, even starting at the local level.

I mean, if you have got an area of Afghanistan that is safe, where local people can participate in their own development, go for it. Put money into that place while patiently working on the political process at the same time.

Mr. BARTOLINI. First of all, I agree with George. You clearly outlined the complexity of the situation. There are no easy answers, and I agree that the U.S. cannot do this on our own. However, we are doing quite a bit on the humanitarian side. We are providing the bulk of the assistance going into Afghanistan, and we have been for the last few years, and I think we obviously need to do that.

But on the political side, I do think that there is a road map that we can look at as to what we do not want to follow, and your question as to the American people, and their question as to why we should do this at all, I think of you look at Afghans, they really were our proxies in one of the most important battles of the cold war.

They did have very much a functioning society prior to the Soviet invasion in the seventies, and we did try to help them after the Soviet withdrawal, but I think the U.S., it was not only on the U.S.'s shoulders, but we became frustrated with the intervention from the surrounding countries, and we basically just gave up on them, and I think that is the point that we cannot do again, when we look at the situation that we are in today, and it will not be an easy process, and I do not have any easy solutions.

It does seem that the U.N. will have to get involved at some point in terms of the nation-building aspect of this, but my plea today is that we do not do what we did in the past, and that is for whatever trials and tribulations we have to go through on the political side, that we stick it out.

Senator WELLSTONE. We should finish, and I think Professor Lugar has really raised the key question. I have here a statement from Senator Boxer, who was at the briefing and then could not come over, and I almost—I feel like—I know that if Barbara was

here she would want to talk a lot about the role of Afghan women in economic reconstruction, and I wonder whether you all might comment on the ways in which that could become a priority.

[The prepared statement of Senator Boxer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Thank you Senator Wellstone, I am grateful that we are teaming up to co-chair this, our second hearing on the tragic situation in Afghanistan.

And, thank you so much for your leadership on this crucial issue of providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. You have been a strong and forceful advocate for Afghan people who are suffering not just in Afghanistan, but also in neighboring countries as refugees.

The United States, and indeed the international community, must understand that the military operations in Afghanistan are only part of the strategy in ensuring that Afghanistan is no longer a safe-haven for Osama bin Laden and other terrorists.

While the Taliban has lost a lot of ground—especially in the northern part of the country—it does not mean that the humanitarian situation will be easily solved.

In fact, it was repeatedly pointed out in our last hearing that the humanitarian crisis did not start with U.S. and allied airstrikes. It is the product of over 20 years of war and a historic and horrific drought.

Of course, this crisis is exacerbated by the harsh policies of the Taliban. And, I hope that during today's hearing we will learn how recent events on the battlefield will help facilitate aid to regions of Afghanistan that were previously controlled by the Taliban.

I also hope we can examine the longer term humanitarian needs of the Afghan people.

If we are to ensure that Afghanistan ceases to be a haven for terrorists, we have to provide for the long term reconstruction needs of that country. We need to help Afghans set up a broad-based government that represents all groups—including women.

And, we need to provide for the long-term security of Afghanistan that will likely include an international force to keep the peace during the post-Taliban transition.

After the Soviets left Afghanistan in the late 1980s, we did not do enough to help bring stability and lasting security to the Afghan people. We can not make that mistake again.

I look forward to hearing from our two panels of witnesses this afternoon to hear their ideas on providing for the short-term humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, as well as the long term reconstruction effort.

Thank you.

Senator WELLSTONE. I think it is an important question in and of itself, and I have got to ask that in behalf of my good buddy, Senator Boxer as well. Just real quickly, could you do that—not as an aside. I just do not want to keep you a real long time. George just got back in last night. Any kind of reflections or comments you all might want to make?

Mr. BARTOLINI. Well, I laid out in my testimony some of the potential problems I see in the coming months in terms of providing aid, but I also agree with statements that have been made, and you mentioned, Senator Lugar, that there are incredible opportunities here for Afghanistan, and clearly this is one of them.

Of all the civilians that have suffered under the Taliban rule, I do not think anybody has suffered more than women, and as to the mechanism of more directly involving them in the political process, I really cannot offer too many specifics. I think it is a difficult thing to do in that part of the world, but clearly there are a number of organizations at grassroots level in Pakistan that have been working on this for sometime.

The IRC has an adjunct, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, and this has been an issue that they have

really focused on, and so there are nascent efforts, not so nascent, actually, now. They have been working for years to incorporate women's views, to build them into the political system, and with the events of the last few days I think we have a real opportunity there.

Senator WELLSTONE. George, did you want to say anything?

Mr. DEVENDORF. Maybe very brief ones. I agree completely with Mark's statement. This is a society which has been getting by, to use that term, with the creativity and productivity of half its people for far too long now, and in order to try to rectify that belief, agencies such as ours and the U.N. will really need to focus on education first and foremost for Afghan women, but then also look at ways to improve their productivity through credit schemes, through vocational training, health training and other things, that really should not come as add-ons to existing projects, but should, in fact, be thematic and cross-cutting for all the activities that we engage in.

Senator WELLSTONE. I think Senator Boxer would love that word, not add-ons.

Let me just tell you that I think this was a superb hearing, a superb hearing because you are here, and also because we had excellent testimony from the administration, and I think the next hearing the subcommittee is going to have after—we are going to be gone for a week—is going to be on economic reconstruction, and what the key components of that will be, and get some people, Dick, that can think through—as you said, this is part of what we want to use the committee for is an educational forum.

I mean, no one wants to be arrogant, and God knows, it does not work anywhere, and it does not work there, in Afghanistan, but you just provided us with so much helpful information. I thank you so much.

And Senator Lugar, it is an honor that you have joined us. Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman—great hearing.

Senator WELLSTONE. The committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:35 p.m., the subcommittees adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

[Oxfam International—10 October 2001]

#### REBUILDING AFGHANISTAN: AN AGENDA FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

The international community has begun to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. These efforts need to continue and intensify. But the needs of the country and its people will go beyond this immediate humanitarian crisis. Afghanistan will require a sustained international commitment to achieve peace and to rebuild the country after more than 20 years of war. This is not a short-term task; the international community will need to stay engaged, both politically and financially, for many years to come.

Despite the current climate of fear and uncertainty, many Afghan citizens continue to work for peace and reconstruction in their country. Oxfam partners are working today to provide education to girls, to provide clean water to villages, and to remove landmines left behind by war. These groups and many others are continuing this important work and are ready to be part of an effort to rebuild their country.

It is not too early to begin making the political and economic commitments that will be required to rebuild Afghanistan. To this end, Oxfam recommends the following.

1. AN INTENSIFIED EFFORT TO ADDRESS WIDESPREAD HUMANITARIAN NEED IN AFGHANISTAN AND IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

All efforts must be made to get food to Afghan people inside the country. Food is most likely to reach people in need if the aid effort is impartial and separate from military action. Assistance should be delivered through the UN and partner agencies, using existing distribution mechanisms (truck and donkey convoys) and local organizational capacity (local professional and traditional groups) to the extent possible. The USA, the European Union, and neighboring countries should ensure that borders are opened; respecting people's right to seek refuge, and that adequate assistance is provided, meeting the standards established under international humanitarian law and as set out within the Sphere framework. Particular attention should be given to the protection of women in a context where there is greater vulnerability to gender-based violence.

2. A UN-LED EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A BROAD-BASED POLITICAL COALITION IN AFGHANISTAN

A UN mission in Afghanistan should draw lessons from previous experience in East Timor and Mozambique in order to ensure an effective transition to national governance. This process should be guided by the following principles:

Responsive and accountable governance, which gives space to civil society to participate in the political process.

Recognition of all ethnic, religious, and regional groups in any process of transition.

Representation of women in structures of government and political dialogue.

Adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law, and to the international conventions on rights to which Afghanistan is a signatory.

Ensuring support for these principles will only be possible if there is a sustained commitment by global powers to put aside historic enmities and alliances, to cease supporting single factions, and to invest in a broad-based national coalition.

3. CONTROLS ON ARMS SUPPLIES TO THE REGION

The continued flow of arms to Afghanistan is a major cause of destabilization. As part of a longer-term strategy, the UN and neighboring countries should develop a comprehensive disarmament plan for Afghanistan and the region.

4. A RECONSTRUCTION PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN

An ambitious plan is required to resolve the chronic poverty, displacement, and damage caused by over 20 years of war. A reconstruction plan for Afghanistan will require strong leadership from the UN, in order to ensure real and perceived impartiality in the delivery of assistance. This plan should incorporate a regional strategy for addressing the grave conditions of poverty, displacement, and humanitarian need suffered by Afghanistan's neighbors. Critical needs will be in the areas of:

*Health and Education*

Long-term development for Afghanistan requires that resources be focused particularly on education and health. Educated women who have been restricted from working in their profession (especially in the health and education sectors) must be re-integrated into society and allowed to contribute to the rebuilding of Afghanistan. An equitable education system for boys and girls, minority and Pashtun, urban and rural populations, must be developed.

*Women's rights and representation*

A specific strategy to address women's exclusion will be required in any reconstruction plan. Development plans should recognize the many existing women's organizations in the country, and those operating from neighboring countries. The UN Gender Advisor post for Afghanistan should be filled immediately, and should participate in the highest levels of decision-making. Afghanistan should be supported in carrying through its commitments as a signatory to the Conventions on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. Afghanistan should also be encouraged to ratify CEDAW.

*Support to Afghan civil society*

Afghanistan has been largely portrayed as having no organizational structures outside of religious extremism and military factions. But there is an important professional, non-sectarian civil society that will ultimately determine the success of any efforts to rebuild the country. Afghanistan has also been home to some of the most important and courageous women's organizations in the region. These groups should be acknowledged and supported as part of any reconstruction effort.

## 5. DONOR COORDINATION

This will be crucial, given the significant amount of funding coming into the country. Donors should support the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi in his new role as UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan in charge of the UN's overall humanitarian and political work in the country. A starting point for this mission should be the important work that was done on the 1999 Strategic Framework for International Assistance document, which went through wide consultation with international and national organizations. Donors should be committed to providing sustained and substantial funding.

## 6. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

This will be increasingly important in ensuring that there is adequate monitoring capacity of the political transition and reconstruction efforts. The EU should demonstrate its long-term interest by setting out a comprehensive strategy in support of the UN effort. The EU should extend the Common Foreign and Security Policy from its current focus on the Balkans and the Middle East to include Afghanistan and its neighbors.

## CONCLUSION

In 1995, Boutros Boutros Ghali said that Afghanistan had become one of "the world's orphaned conflicts—the ones the West, selective and promiscuous in its attention, happens to ignore." The current climate of war has again brought attention to Afghanistan's historic suffering. It is time now to ensure that it receives the attention it deserves, and does not once again slip into the realm of forgotten crises that the world has left behind.

For more information about Oxfam's work in Afghanistan, please go to [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org); for more information about Oxfam's advocacy and policy work in Washington, please contact Bernice Romero or John Ruthrauff at 202-496-1180.

[Oxfam Briefing Note—1 November 2001]

## FOOD HAS NOW RUN OUT FOR MANY AFGHAN PEOPLE

For over four weeks Oxfam International has been increasingly concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. We have been calling on all parties for a pause in military action and for the World Food Programme urgently to step up the trucking of food into Afghanistan before winter sets in. We now fear that time is running out for some communities. For others, time will run out if food deliveries do not dramatically increase in the next weeks and months.

This failure by the international community to deliver enough food, combined with growing insecurity, has left hundreds of thousands of people suffering acute food shortages. In some areas of acute need, the bombing and the increased fighting from the Taliban and Northern Alliance has added to a climate of fear that has made many truck drivers and aid workers too frightened to work.

Given the significant differences across Afghanistan, both in terms of need and access, any options must be specifically designed to meet the conditions on the ground. This may require a range of actors negotiating access to different areas of the country, and different approaches according to local conditions. They must reach all Afghans in need including those who may become trapped in their villages by the coming snows and spreading violence. This will require a flexible approach that draws from the local knowledge of Afghan organisations and international agencies operating on the ground.

We are therefore calling for:

1. *The trucking of food to be dramatically increased to areas where access is still possible* (including most of the central provinces of Bamyan, Uruzgan and Wardak). There are still thousands of people that can and must be reached by a significantly increased delivery of food into Afghanistan by land, and by air drops and lifts into secure zones. Greater diplomatic pressure is required to en-

sure that neighbouring countries are facilitating trucking into Afghanistan by easing bureaucracy at borders. This is a priority option for zones considered accessible and will require increased efforts by WFP to move higher quantities of food into the country.

2. *The United Nations, the ICRC, and the coalition governments to consider more radical options for some regions* (including parts of Faryab, Ghor, Balkh and Badghis) *where food is already running out.* This could include the negotiation of safe routes and safe zones for food delivery, and air drops. We know that some of these options are not the most effective way to get food to people, and that trucking would have been better. But given the level of the crisis in some areas, all options must now be considered. It should not be forgotten that the Geneva Conventions clearly establish the obligation of all warring parties to ensure that food and medical supplies reach civilians.

3. *A pause in all military action, including air strikes,* at least in some zones so that food stores within the country can be replenished. The specific areas and timing should be negotiated and co-ordinated by the United Nations. We believe that this would remove an important fear that is preventing truck drivers from working in some areas of acute need.

New food aid is moving into some parts of Afghanistan. But seven provinces in the north, north-west and centre of Afghanistan include areas of acute concern. Reports of deteriorating security, and the rapid onset of winter in mountainous areas, come on top of the existing need for substantial food aid. Oxfam draws this conclusion from WFP estimates in July predicting that food would run out within 3–6 months in these selected areas. While there is no reliable information about population movements since September, there are also no reports of significant numbers of refugees from these provinces. This suggests that the majority of people are still in their homes and may have even been joined by people fleeing the cities.

At the start of November, some but limited new food is entering the country, and winter is closing in. WFP's earlier projections suggest that parts of Afghanistan are on the threshold of a far deeper crisis. It is now likely that:

In the north and north-west, in parts of the four provinces of Badghis, Faryab, Ghor, and Balkh, 400,000 people are already suffering acute food shortages. At least 1,300,000 will probably have little or no food by the end of December. At least 700,000 of these live in Faryab.

Around 350,000 people in Badghis, Ghor, and Faryab are located in areas soon to be largely cut off by the onset of snows during November. After that, aid will only be able to get through with extraordinary measures to keep overland routes open or supply by air:

In the north-east, in parts of Badakhshan, around 260,000 people will be largely cut off by the onset of winter this month, and will have little or no food by the end of December. They too will need especial efforts to get aid to them.

In the central provinces of Bamyan, Uruzgan and Wardak, 13 of the 25 districts may be largely cut off during winter because of their high terrain, affecting over 540,000 people.

Oxfam and its partner organisations continue to deliver assistance in some of these areas, where security allows. Our current aid is mostly food purchased locally through Oxfam grants, and distributing food supplied by WFP in the central highlands and north-east. In Ghor, Badghis and the mountainous parts of Herat and Farah, we will be doing everything possible to support partners to keep roads open during the winter.

The war further complicates this picture, because even in the zones that are not cut off by winter snows, accessibility for aid workers is severely limited by insecurity. Taliban soldiers and other militias have looted aid offices in Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Ghazni, Kunduz and other areas. Insecurity in Kandahar and Herat is due to a break down of law and order; in Ghor and Badghis it is due to increased fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance. Continued bombing in most parts of north and central Afghanistan, and the use of cluster bombs, have created a climate of fear that severely limits the ability of WFP and other agencies to continue food deliveries. Islamic NGOs that are currently delivering food into the east believe that they could do much more if fear by truckers could be diminished.

## BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: THE PLIGHT OF THOSE SEEKING REFUGE FROM AFGHANISTAN

War and drought in Afghanistan have generated the second largest exodus of refugees in the world. Before the current military campaign, there were 3.6 million refugees in neighbouring countries and abroad; now tens of thousands more have fled towards Pakistan and Iran. The conditions faced by internally displaced people and refugees are far below any acceptable standards. Oxfam is calling on the governments of the region and the international community to take urgent action to ensure that basic needs are met and that people's rights are respected within international humanitarian law.

Although the numbers of people who have fled across or towards borders are uncertain, it is clear that people are on the move, fleeing food shortages, bombardments, and violence. The UN estimates that 80 per cent of the population of the southern city of Kandahar has left. Thirty per cent of the population has left Herat in the west, and several other towns are also nearly empty. Many have simply fled to the countryside, but others have sought to cross into neighbouring countries, although relatively few have been allowed to cross the borders.

According to the UN, the Taliban is actively preventing people from leaving Afghanistan, even those in need of urgent medical attention. Gross human rights abuses by the Taliban against people fleeing east from Kabul have been reported. Abuses by uncontrolled forces will inevitably increase with a breakdown of law and order in many places.

The humanitarian situation in camps inside the Afghanistan border is appalling. In some places conditions are deteriorating rapidly, with cases of malnutrition and disease on the rise because essential, life-saving conditions such as access to food, clean water and medicines cannot be provided. Camps in Pakistan are inadequate; new sites do not meet standards of safety nor allow conditions for life with dignity.

Neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran, have been generous in hosting millions of Afghan refugees in recent years, but these countries have now stated that it is against their national interests to open their borders. While their concerns may be valid, it is clearly their responsibility, with sufficient financial and institutional backing from the international community, to ensure that refugees are granted due protection and assistance.

Oxfam fears that the growing tensions around refugees are leading to an environment in which measures may be taken to round up and return refugees to Afghanistan. If refugees were to be turned away at the borders and pushed back into Afghanistan, where their lives are in danger, this would amount to *refoulement*—forced repatriation—and would contravene the 1951 Refugee Convention. Nearly all the countries in the region have signed and ratified this document, which has acquired the force of a customary international law over all countries.

The breakdown of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law inside Afghanistan, and the collapse of the international refugee asylum system in the region, amount to a profound failure by the international community to uphold those measures introduced in the aftermath of the Second World War to ensure that massive abuses of human rights would never be allowed to happen again. The failure of the coalition governments to campaign sufficiently for the protection of civilians inside Afghanistan and the opening of borders to provide asylum for legitimate refugees in neighbouring states is a particularly alarming aspect of the current crisis.

There are immediate steps that can be taken to diminish the obstacles and fears faced by neighbouring states. Arguments to keep the borders shut could be more easily countered if a proper system of refugee status determination was in place, with refugee camps located at a suitable distance from international borders, and with an assurance of their civilian nature guaranteed by the host countries and the UNHCR. To meet the financial burden of this crisis, donors must provide prompt and adequate funding and institutional support for host governments. These pledges must be quickly fulfilled, since these countries are already among the poorest in the world, and facing the same devastating three-year drought as Afghanistan.

*Oxfam is therefore calling for:*

1. States neighbouring Afghanistan to open their borders to refugees without further delay. Neighbouring states should remove all obstacles to granting immediate protection and assistance to all those fleeing Afghanistan. This must include the agreement to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*. Protection would also include the establishment of secure and habitable living areas (camps), with adequate provision of shelter, food, water and sanitation, health

care, and other basic necessities according to recognised minimum standards (e.g. Spheres<sup>1</sup>). Given the time it is taking to establish a proper system of refugee status determination, temporary protection should be granted, but only as a very interim measure that does not impede people from seeking full refugee status.

2. The international community, the United Nations and the U.S.- and UK-led coalition must make clear and public statements in favour of open borders. Insufficient pressure and incentives have been applied to countries in the region to address the refugee situation seriously. Coalition governments have a particular role to play in ensuring that humanitarian law is upheld, and that diplomatic efforts in the region include explicit agreements on addressing the needs and rights of refugees.

3. Neighbouring states should provide secure access for impartial humanitarian agencies to refugee camps and should themselves offer whatever assistance they can. This is likely to be the only way in which the welfare of refugees can be assured. Measures should be taken to preserve the civilian nature of the camps, such as providing policing, ensuring camps are at an adequate distance from any military zone, and preventing camps being used to recruit refugees into militia.

4. Donor countries must ensure adequate funding. While pledges for the Afghanistan appeal have been high, donors must deliver the cash as soon as possible in order to reassure host countries that the financial burden of humanitarian support is indeed being shared among donor and host countries. Early pledges will also increase flexibility in the delivery of relief into Afghanistan and throughout the region. Funding should be sustained for the medium- to long-term, supporting development projects in the host countries as well.

5. UNHCR must fulfil its protection mandate. In this charged climate, the UNHCR must strongly denounce any moves to repatriate refugees forcibly. In addition, the UNHCR's own guidelines and standards for the protection of women should be implemented. Humanitarian agencies should deploy women in their planning and front-line staff, so that access to refugee girls and women is increased.

6. Human rights and protection observers should be deployed. Staff of the UN's Human Rights Commission should be engaged in any assistance situation, whether inside Afghanistan or in neighbouring countries. They would play an important role as witnesses of, and deterrents for, further abuses. They could also address specific concerns relating to gender violence and dislocation. International donors should contribute specifically to this purpose.

#### CONDITIONS FACED BY REFUGEES FLEEING AFGHANISTAN

##### *Afghanistan*

There are rising health concerns at the makeshift camp in Spin Boldak (near the Chaman crossing, but inside Afghanistan and under Taliban control). For example, there have been increasing cases of malnutrition and dysentery among children. According to the UNHCR, the camp's population is about 3000 people, or some 700 families. At least 100 families are reported to be sleeping in the open without any shelter or aid.

##### *Pakistan*

Up to 100,000 people are thought to have entered Pakistan through Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province since 11 September, even though the border has remained officially closed except for "exceptionally vulnerable" persons. Even so, it is believed that an average of 2500 Afghans a day cross the border. According to the UNHCR, an estimated 135,000 refugees have fled to Pakistan between 11 September and 7 November in spite of the dangers, restrictions, and costs of this journey. Many of these people are described by the Pakistan authorities as "invisible," blending in with established refugee communities in the hope of not being deported.

There are clearly not enough camps in place to receive, process, and assist populations in need. Killi Faizo staging camp in Pakistan, near the Chaman border, currently holds some 2400 people and, according to the UN, is over-capacity. The site was filled and further registration closed in just over a week after opening. Longer-term refugee camps have still not been properly established. Conditions in those

<sup>1</sup>The Sphere standards establish a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of humanitarian assistance. They are ascribed to by most major humanitarian agencies, and are endorsed by ICRC, InterAction, VOICE and ICVA.

areas designated as camp sites will almost certainly be extraordinarily harsh and inhospitable.

#### *Iran*

Iran has not opened its borders, even though it is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Instead, it has offered to assist displaced people on the Afghan side of the border through the Iranian Red Crescent Society. This decision removes any recourse for refugees to international legal protection.

Tens of thousands of desperate refugees have reportedly crossed illegally into Iran, many having paid smugglers for their passage. The border with Afghanistan is heavily mined and the risks of death or injury from landmine explosions are very real. Records from visiting medical teams, cited in the UK's national Guardian newspaper on 6 November, indicate that 43,000 refugees have arrived in the country since 11 September, although authorities suggest that the number could be closer to 60,000.

There are currently two established camps near the Iranian border, inside Afghanistan. NGOs have only restricted access to Makaki camp, which receives 900–1000 new arrivals each day. It currently hosts some 7000 refugees. A second camp, "Mile 46," hosts some 144 families, despite the fact that there is very little food or water in the area. Iran provides electricity and a small clinic to test for communicable diseases, such as malaria, cholera, and TB. These camps have filled very quickly since opening.

The Iranian authorities are considering opening a third camp at Pashmakeh. However, conditions here might be even worse than at the other two camps, with particular concerns about water.

#### *Turkmenistan*

There are mixed groups of combatants and civilians living in difficult conditions along Turkmenistan's border with Afghanistan. Screening and disarmament would be necessary in order to provide protection to civilians. The border is officially closed to people wishing to enter the country. Importantly, the government of Turkmenistan has agreed to facilitate visas for foreigners working with Afghans across the border, but has expressly forbidden emergency work with newly arrived refugees.

#### *Uzbekistan*

Uzbekistan hosts approximately 30,000 Tajik refugees, but very few Afghan refugees. It is unlikely to see a large number of refugees at its small border with Afghanistan. However, the government has agreed actively to facilitate cross-border assistance. It has also allowed the establishment of a forward UN logistics base on the border at Termez.

#### *Tajikistan*

Tajikistan hosts some 5000 officially registered refugees. The borders to Tajikistan are open for humanitarian access but not for general population movement. There are an estimated 10–15,000 Afghan refugees living on islands in the Pyandzh River which separates the two countries. The Taliban front line is about one mile from some of these islands, and combatants have not been separated from genuine refugees. Conditions on these islands are poor, with limited access to water and a great need for clothing and shoes for children. Last winter many refugees died of hypothermia, malnutrition, and disease.

