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## Afghanistan: a Year After

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Afghanistan: a Year After

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10 December 2002

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## **Introduction**

What has changed in Afghanistan? All our hopes are crushed. We are completely disappointed. Look: all the same warlords are in power as before.

Source: Herat resident, 11 September, 2002, quoted in *All Our Hopes are crushed; Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan*, Human Rights Watch, November 2002.

On 13 November 2001 United Front (UF) troops entered Kabul after Taliban forces had fled the city. The speed of the collapse of the Taliban regime surprised many observers given the fact that the first US air strikes against targets in Afghanistan were launched in the first week of October and elements of US Special Forces as well as the CIA began operations in collaboration with the United Front and other anti-Taliban forces soon after. This brief does not aim to provide a detailed account of military operations by US and allied forces which still continue, albeit at a much reduced scale. Nor does it attempt to make a judgement on the war on terror. What it does provide is an assessment of the situation in Afghanistan a year after the event; the attempts by the various factions to unite and, with the help of the international community, form an interim administration in a country which has witnessed nothing but war and suppression for more than two decades. The international community has also rallied in its attempts to rebuild the country, realising belatedly the enormity of the problems facing the country—ranging from one of the major refugee crises in recent times to the challenges of building a basic infrastructure where none exists or is in ruins.

## **Background**

Following the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001 which were linked to al-Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden, President Bush asked the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to hand over bin Laden. He had earlier been held responsible for masterminding the terrorist attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 as well as the attack on USS Cole in Yemen in October 2000. Reacting to the Taliban's unwillingness to do so President Bush made it clear that he would make no distinction between the perpetrators of terrorism and those who harboured them.

By the end of September the US had decided on military action and to support the United Front (UF)<sup>1</sup> which had been fighting a prolonged but unsuccessful war to overthrow the Taliban regime. The CIA, backed up by small detachments of US Special Forces, soon

made contact with the UF and provided it with financial support to re-equip its forces. A combination of three factors: intense aerial bombing by the US air force, CIA funded bribing of frontline Taliban commanders to ensure their defection and attacks by the UF forces ensured the withdrawal of Taliban forces. On 13 November, the UF entered the capital, Kabul.<sup>2</sup> By then the UF forces had also taken the key centres of Mazar-e-Sharif, Taloqan, Bamiyan as well as the north-western city of Herat. By the end of the month, UF troops had captured all the major cities in the country including Kunduz and Kandahar and elements of the Taliban had begun to surrender or had fled to remote areas. In other words, the Taliban had lost control of the country. This process was accelerated by the fact that several thousand Pashtun soldier in southern Afghanistan had come over to the winning side to fight the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Apart from the US, several Western countries including Australia, Canada, France, UK, Denmark, Norway and Germany played a significant role in the defeat of the Taliban.<sup>3</sup> Mopping up operations still continue but the focus has shifted to the Afghan–Pakistan border where the Taliban have shifted, taking advantage of the porous border to conduct harassment operations.

## **The Rebuilding Process**

On 3 October 2001, the UN Secretary-General appointed Lakhdar Brahimi as his Special Representative for Afghanistan with a mandate for ensuring the success of humanitarian and political endeavours of the United Nations in Afghanistan. After an intense round of negotiations, firstly with Afghanistan's neighbours, the US and Russia and, secondly, with a number of key Afghan groups, a UN-sponsored conference was convened in Bonn. On 5 December 2001, representatives of the four key anti-Taliban Afghan groups signed an accord on the composition of a 30 member interim council which would govern Afghanistan from 22 December for six months after which the former King Zahir Shah would convene an emergency Afghan Grand Assembly or Loya Jirga which would appoint a Transitional Authority. It also provided for the convening of a Constitutional Loya Jirga within eighteen months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority in order to adopt a new constitution for Afghanistan. A Constitutional Commission (with the help of the United Nations) would be established within two months of the commencement of the Transitional Authority and free and fair elections would be held within two years from the date of the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga. The accord also provided for the United Nations to mandate a peacekeeping force to guarantee Kabul's security. The position of the Chairman of the Interim Authority went to Hamed Karzai.<sup>4</sup> (During the period of the Taliban rule, he had spent most of his time in Pakistan and the United States).

In December 2001, the UN Security Council, in accordance with Chapter VII authorised the establishment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) with an enforced mandate of the UN Charter. As has been observed:<sup>5</sup>



It was not a 'UN peacekeeping force' under direct UN authority, or even a 'peacekeeping force' designed to stabilise a cease-fire through interposition, but—as its title suggested - a security assistance force, to secure Kabul and assist the process of developing a unified national army. Its expenses were to be met by the participating member states. The lead in this respect was taken by the United Kingdom, with Major-General John McCall as ISAF commander. Within a short space of time it became clear that the force would be largely European.

In March 2002, a UN Security Council Resolution (1401) established the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Among its duties is to assist the Afghan administration in conducting elections.

In accordance with the Bonn agreement, the emergency Loya Jirga convened in Kabul from 11–19 June 2002. It was attended by over 1600 delegates including representatives of various ethnic groups, appointees of various warlords and members of the Afghan community living overseas. There were reports of intimidation of delegates by warlords and other powerbrokers as well as surveillance by agents of the Afghan intelligence service (Amniyat-i-Milli). President Bush's special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, was also reported to have persuaded the former Afghan king Mohammed Zahir Shah to withdraw his nomination, leaving Karzai as the only contender.<sup>6</sup> Despite the irregularities, the Loya Jirga was called a success. 'It was the first moderately democratic Loya Jirga to confer indirect popular legitimacy on an Afghan head of state. After 24 years of conflict, it served as a major forum for the Afghans to air their differences.'<sup>7</sup>

The appointment of Hamid Karzai as President of the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) and the cabinet named by him differed only slightly from that of the interim administration. It was also accompanied by several problems. Firstly, Karzai himself while being a Pashtun from Kandahar did not (and still does not) have a national standing. Secondly, the newly appointed cabinet, as was the case with the interim administration, was dominated by members of the UF who were also given key portfolios including foreign affairs and defence. This has been a source of resentment among the majority Pashtuns who have complained of being under represented. Finally, and perhaps one of the most intractable problems, has been that of warlords who have refused to accept the Kabul administration.

Failure to restore security outside Kabul is understandable given the country's past history. Kabul itself has not been immune to acts of terror. Consider the following events of 2002:

- on 14 February the Civil Aviation Minister Abdul Rehman was killed by his political rivals
- on 8 April, the interim administration's Defence Minister, Mohammed Fahim, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt
- on 6 July Deputy President Haji Abdul Qadir and his driver were shot and killed by gunmen outside his office in Kabul

- President Karzai's Western trained personal body guards were replaced by US Special forces soldiers
- on 5 September President Karzai narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in Kandahar by a man later linked to the Taliban. The same day, a car bomb exploded in Kabul, killing 30, and
- on 23 November Afghan intelligence officials indicated that they had thwarted another assassination attempt on the life of President Karzai. The suicide bomber had reportedly changed his plans and intended to assassinate Vice President and Defence Minister Mohammad Fahim.<sup>8</sup>

## The Ongoing Problems

### The Warlords

As mentioned above, one of the more intractable problems that emerged after the fall of the Taliban was the resurgence of warlordism all over Afghanistan. Those factions that had united, albeit temporarily, soon reverted to their old ways to assert their control over various provinces. Some of them had been opposed to the Taliban regime but, for most of them, it was a question of switching allegiances and claiming to have been anti-Taliban. US actions too have done little to ensure security for ordinary Afghans. Firstly, the US refused to agree to extend the mandate of the ISAF beyond Kabul and its environs. Secondly, in its eagerness to pursue the Taliban, it sought cooperation with certain warlords with dubious credentials thereby aggravating the problem. As a result, according to a Human Rights Watch report:<sup>9</sup>

... Afghanistan remains a fractured, undemocratic collection of 'fiefdoms' in which warlords are free to intimidate, extort, and repress local populations, while almost completely denying basic freedoms. Afghanistan, a textbook definition of a failed state under the Taliban now risks becoming a state that fails its people, except this time on the international community's watch.

Human Rights Watch has also conducted numerous field surveys and documented cases of factional rivalries which often erupt into open hostilities, jeopardising the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), aid delivery, resettlement of displaced communities apart from causing loss of human lives.

In its recent report on Western Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch details the case of Ismail Khan whose forces, assisted by the United States and Iran, advanced on and took Herat. US and Iranian aid has helped him create a 'virtual mini-state in Herat with little allegiance to Kabul.'<sup>10</sup> Members of the Pashtun minority have specially been targeted for abuse and, even as other refugees have returned, tens of thousands of Pashtuns have fled western Afghanistan to Kandahar, Iran and Pakistan. Combined with other repressive measures, it is clear that nothing has changed in this part of Afghanistan.

Human Right Watch's report on the situation in Northern Afghanistan is equally disturbing. In the absence of a recognisable administration in Balkh province which includes the region's major city, Mazar-i-Sharif (incidentally it also happens to be a major base for current military operations by western forces) the region remains an area of open hostilities. The main protagonists are the predominantly Uzbek Junbish-i-Milli led by General Abdul Rashid Dostam and the Tajik Jamiat-i-Islami led by General Atta Mohammad backed by Defence Minister Mohammad Qasem Fahim. Ironically, they were allies in the campaign to overthrow the Taliban.<sup>11</sup>

## **Aid: Rehabilitation and Reconstruction**

Under the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN mission adopted what came to be known as the 'light footprint' approach. The guiding principle behind this was to build and bolster Afghan capacity for nation building and reconstruction with a limited UN presence and employing as many Afghan staff as possible. This was in sharp contrast to extensive UN involvement in Kosovo and East Timor where the UN had extensive political and administrative roles. There were practical reasons for this. The mandate of the ISAF did not extend beyond Kabul and in any event, the US and its allies were engaged in military operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban with the active participation of local warlords in other parts of the country.

Pledges totalling US\$4.5 billion were secured at an International Conference on Reconstruction Aid for Afghanistan (ICRAA) hosted by Japan in January 2002. Most of the funding was promised for the next two years when it would be needed most. Donors promised to deliver more than US\$1.8 billion of the total in 2002. Later pledges pushed this figure to US\$2 billion. However, it can be argued that these commitments were made at a time when, given the political turmoil in Afghanistan, no agency had a clear idea of the magnitude of the problem. Given the short time frame, it was also not possible to draw up detailed plans as to how the rebuilding and reconstruction projects were to be executed. Add to this the facts that there was a barely functioning government in Kabul with no funds to pay its employees and the rising expectations of the local populace after the fall of the Taliban. Consequently, while aid pledges were a clear indication of the international community's support for Karzai's interim administration, they did nothing to ameliorate the immediate problems of the locals.

In the months following the setting up of the Interim Authority, severe hardship continued to plague local populations as food shortages continued in various parts of the country and health levels continued to deteriorate. In response to this deprivation, there was an increase in poppy cultivation despite the interim government's offer to compensate the farmers for crop substitution. International bureaucracy also created its own problems. The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Interim Trust Fund which included contributions from bilateral and multilateral aid agencies was designed to cover the Karzai administration's operating costs. The World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund was to fund capacity development, the government's recurring budgetary

expenditures and priority sectoral investments. This overlap not only created inefficiencies but could also be viewed as 'a manifestation of competition between the UNDP and the World Bank for control over Afghanistan's reconstruction.'<sup>12</sup> Lack of structures for the dispersal and absorption of aid only served to compound Afghanistan's problems.

While these delays led some to question the legitimacy of the Karzai administration, it should be emphasised that this is the first instance of rebuilding a failed state where a nascent government is taking charge of rebuilding the country. As a UNDP official described it, 'we are supporting the creation of the *appearance* of authority in the hope that it leads to the creation of *actual* authority.'<sup>13</sup> Credit for this gradual, albeit slow, process has been attributed to the Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai. A former senior executive at the World Bank he now chairs the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (ACAA) charged with developing a framework for donor-funded reconstruction and investment projects. Earlier this year, the AACA refused to let development agencies and NGOs undertake various 'pre-packaged' projects. Other problems identified with aid projects in Afghanistan (as has been the case elsewhere) include:<sup>14</sup>

- donor countries not delivering the quantity or type of aid promised
- an unwillingness of some of the major donor countries to have their money pooled onto a trust fund for the whole of Afghanistan. Added to this is the cumbersome procedures of donor countries in the dispersal of aid
- the arrival of UN personnel and those working for international NGOs has had a distorting effect on the economy, at least in Kabul. Apart from the astronomical rises in house rents, there has also been an impact on the functioning of the government as experienced personnel quickly find employment with UN agencies and NGOs which pay salaries in multiples of what the government can afford.

Exacerbating the situation was the return of an unprecedented number of refugees from neighbouring countries. While relief agencies had been expecting the return of about 500 000 refugees, according to estimates nearly 2 million have come back. Due to security problems in other parts of Afghanistan, most of them have returned to Kabul, placing heavy pressure on relief agencies.

In July 2002, Human Rights Watch was highly critical of the UNHCR for having reversed its earlier policy of promoting voluntary repatriation of refugees and advising governments not to rush repatriation before conditions were stabilised in Afghanistan. Maintaining that the new UNHCR policy to encourage Afghans with pending asylum claims to voluntarily return as it would relieve pressure on asylum systems, Human Rights Watch said that this argument would play into the hands of governments such as Australia and the UK that were already putting pressure on Afghan refugees to return.<sup>15</sup>

Given the problems outlined above, the aid program to Afghanistan cannot be termed as having been unsuccessful despite the fact that as of August, of the US\$2 billion pledged,

approximately US\$1.3 billion had either been spent, was available to be spent or was going to be available. This amounted to 65 per cent of the total. While acknowledging the fragile nature of the gains made over the past year, US Secretary of State Colin Powell commented at a meeting of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Steering Group in September, '[t]hat's not bad, but it's not nearly as good as it needs to be.'<sup>16</sup>

While no major high profile reconstruction projects which would provide employment to the local population were initiated in the first half of 2002, there have been plenty of low profile activities undertaken over the last year to improve the quality of life of ordinary Afghans including women and children. (Details are at Appendix A). The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is currently distributing some 3700 tons of wheat seeds and around 7000 tons of fertilisers to about half a million farming families in almost all provinces of Afghanistan that suffered severely by conflict and over three years of drought. Although the FAO admits that current distribution covers only a small amount of the total requirement (total requirement is estimated at 250 000 tons per season), it also demonstrates the enormity of the problem facing a country lacking basic infrastructure and distribution facilities as well as the continuing need for donor support.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike 2001, when the fall of the Taliban came shortly before the onset of winter leaving relief agencies little opportunity to prepare for mass distribution of food, in 2002 relief agencies are pre-positioning food in vulnerable areas throughout the country in order to assist as many as five million people this winter.<sup>18</sup>

The United States remains the country's largest donor, having provided more than US\$588 million for humanitarian assistance and other projects since October 2001. On 14 November 2002 the US Senate passed the Afghanistan Freedom Support Bill authorising US\$3.3 billion in economic, political, humanitarian assistance over the next four years. The amount also includes an amount of US\$500 million per year over the next two years to support the ISAF, or a similar force, if President Bush so decides.<sup>19</sup> While it has still to go before appropriations committees, it is reported to have President Bush's support. This is the clearest indication yet that the US has no intention of walking away from the country and is committed to rebuilding the shattered country that is Afghanistan.

There are other indications that progress is being made across various sectors. The UNAMA and NGOs are working in conjunction with personnel in various ministries to train them in priority setting, planning and budgeting for relief efforts with the aim of transferring these responsibilities to the Afghan government.

In November, work began on rebuilding the Kabul-Kandahar section of the 1062 kilometre Kabul-Kandahar-Herat highway, Afghanistan's main transport artery. A US\$180 million joint project of the US, Japan and Saudi Arabia, it also includes funding for mine clearance along the highway and is expected to create employment over the next few years. The 483 kilometre Kabul-Khandahar segment of the road is scheduled to be completed by 2005. According to an Asian Development Bank estimate a total of US\$650 million will be needed over the next two and a half years to repair this and other major

roads comprising approximately 1770 kilometres of the country's 21 082 kilometres of roads.<sup>20</sup>

Other capital intensive proposals such as the provision of a telephone network and housing are largely centered around Kabul primarily because of security concerns. However delays in the provision of aid are also caused because of attempts by donor countries to link these contracts to their aid commitments.

## **Australia's Role in Afghanistan**

After the September 2001 events, Australia was among the first (and the first non-NATO) countries to declare its support for the US fight against international terrorism. The ANZUS Treaty was invoked for the first time. A 150-man Special Forces Task Group drawn primarily from the Special Air Service Regiment has been on the ground in Afghanistan since 27 November last year and began operations in early December. Australian troops were among the first Coalition troops to be deployed in Afghanistan and commence operations against al Qaeda and the Taliban. After three rotations the Special Forces began to return from late November and most elements are expected to be back by Christmas 2002. Other contributions included two Boeing 707 aircraft to support air to air refuelling operations and four FA-18 strike aircraft to provide protection to Coalition assets at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from its contribution to the military operations, Australia has also made substantial contributions to humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan since September 2001. By November 2002, this figure had exceeded \$53 million making it Australia's second largest response to a humanitarian crisis, surpassed only by East Timor. (Details are at Appendix B).

## **What Next?**

After having experienced decades of civil war and a breakdown of law and order, it can be argued that a year after the overthrow of the Taliban and the installation of a transitional government, there are grounds for cautious optimism. Nonetheless, numerous challenges lie ahead. On the political front, William Maley, a specialist on Afghanistan, has identified seven of them:<sup>22</sup>

- given the background of treachery and duplicity, it is important to rebuild trust and consensus amongst the elite
- dealing with the problem of warlords some of whom have been financed and armed by the US on grounds that they were opponents of the Taliban
- the shape of new state institutions, whether they should be based on a federal system or one of regional autonomy

- the challenge of holding free and fair elections within two years of the emergency Loya Jirga. Apart from the time frame, the choice of electoral system is also a daunting task
- developing a framework for constructive engagement and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours
- given the fact that peace and nation building is a slow and laborious process requiring time and significant resources, the final challenge is to retain the attention of the international community in the long term.

On the question of reconstruction, there are some encouraging signs. The US, apart from committing a substantial amount of aid has also decided to undertake a major restructure of its forces in Afghanistan which had so far been deployed more or less exclusively for combat operations and attempts to hunt down remnants of the Taliban and al Qaeda. It had also resisted a policing role for its forces. In a tacit admission that security concerns continue to inhibit reconstruction efforts, it now plans to send teams of combat soldiers and civil affairs specialists and Afghan troops around the country to help secure areas and set up bases from where aid and reconstruction projects can be launched. Although details have yet to be finalised, it is a good start.<sup>23</sup> It should also be noted that these efforts are continuing at a time when the attention of the Bush administration has been focussed on Iraq although it is difficult to predict the implications for Afghanistan if the US decides to take military action against the former.

Delays in fulfilling aid pledges remain a problem but this could be overcome if donor countries speeded up the delivery processes and put the interests of the Afghan people above that of their domestic industry and contractors. Better coordination is also essential between foreign donors, multilateral lenders and Afghan agencies.

On the question of the 22-country, 4800 troop ISAF, whose mandate was due to expire on 20 December 2002, it has had its mandate extended for another year.<sup>24</sup> Germany and the Netherlands will take over control of the force currently under Turkish command for the next six months. While it has not been able to expand beyond Kabul because of a lack of agreement on the question, its presence provides essential security in Kabul while the nascent administration of the Karzai government gets firmly established. Random bombings and assassination attempts provide ample evidence of its contribution to the relative stability in Kabul which could easily deteriorate as is the case in other parts of Afghanistan.

As far as the fledgling Afghan army is concerned it will be a long time before enough numbers are trained to ensure security in the country. Afghanistan's feuding warlords also pose a major challenge and it has been suggested that they must be brought into the new national army and security organs if the country is to achieve lasting peace. While this proposal has some merit and is worth pursuing, it will be an extended and difficult process with no guarantee of success.

Summing up, reconstruction of Afghanistan is essential not only for the wellbeing of its people but also to prevent it from reverting to a lawless society and again becoming a haven for terrorists. It is going to be a long and arduous process and will test the patience and endurance not only of the international community but also of the Afghan government and its people.

## Endnotes

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1. The United Front consisted of the Jamiat-i-Islami (Tajik), Hezb-I-Wahdat (Shia Hazara), Junbush-i-Milli (Uzbek) and Hezb-i-Islami (Pashtun).
2. A useful account of the US decision making process is available in the book *Bush at War* by Bob Woodward (Simon and Schuster, 2002), excerpts from which were published in the *Washington Post*, 17–19 November 2002. At this stage the CIA had spent US\$70 million in direct cash leading President Bush to comment 'That's one bargain.'
3. For an analysis of the Afghan campaign see, Michael E. O'Hanlon, 'A Flawed Masterpiece', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, no.3, May–June 2002, pp. 47–63.
4. For an excellent and detailed analysis of the negotiating process see, William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2002, pp. 268–275.
5. *ibid.*, p. 274.
6. Human Rights Watch, *Press Release*, 13 June 2002.
7. Amin Saikal, 'Afghanistan after the Loya Jirga', *Survival*, vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn 2002, p. 48.
8. *New York Times*, 24 November 2002.
9. *All Our Hopes Are Crushed: Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan*, vol. 14, no. 7 (C), November 2002, p. 4.
10. *ibid.*
11. Briefing Paper, *On the Precipice: Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan*, June 2002, p. 1.
12. *AFGHANISTAN: Aid delays erode central authority*, Oxford Analytica, 9 April 2002.
13. Simon Chesterman, 'Walking Softly in Afghanistan', *Survival*, vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn 2002, p. 41.
14. *ibid.*, pp. 42–43.
15. Human Rights Watch, *Press Release*, 23 July 2002.
16. *Transcript*, US Department of State, 26 September 2002.
17. *Washington File*, 18 November 2002.
18. *ibid.*, 15 November 2002.
19. *ibid.*, 15 November 2002.



20. *Kabul-Kandahar-Herat Road Crucial to Afghanistan's Future*, International Information Programs, US Department of State, 28 October 2002.
21. For details of Australian contributions and operations refer to the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Visit to Australian Forces Deployed in the International Coalition Against Terrorism*, October 2002, pp. 10–14, 40–53.
22. *The Afghanistan Wars*, op. cit., pp. 277–281.
23. *Washington Post*, 20 November 2002.
24. *Xinhua News Agency*, 27 November 2002.



## **Appendix A: Fact Sheet, 'Afghanistan Then and Now'**

### **Fear of Starvation**

11 October 2001—International relief organisations feared that hundreds of thousands of Afghans might starve during the winter.

12 October 2002—Famine was averted during the winter of 2001. As of June 2002, 575 000 metric tons of food were delivered to Afghanistan, feeding over 9.8 million people.

### **Refugees**

11 October 2001—Out of a population of 26.8 million, more than 3.5 million Afghans were in refugee camps outside the country and over 1.3 million were internally displaced.

12 October 2002—2 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan, and approximately 630 000 internally displaced persons returned to their homes.

### **Education**

11 October 2001—Schooling for girls over the age of eight was banned. Many girls had not been in school for six years. 7800 women teachers, or 74 per cent of the total, were prohibited from teaching, leaving most girls and 148 000 boys without schooling. Kabul University was closed.

11 October 2002—Over three million children have returned to school. Afghan girls comprise 30 per cent of the total student population. Eight million new textbooks, nearly two million supplementary teaching materials, supplies, and 6000 temporary classrooms accommodate the sudden surge of schoolchildren. The University reopened in Spring 2002.

### **Religious Freedom**

11 October 2001—Freedom of religion, severely restricted due to the absence of a constitution and the ongoing civil war, was determined primarily by the unofficial, unwritten, and evolving policies of the Taliban.

11 October 2002—Religious freedom restored. Legal basis for religious freedom is found in the Bonn Agreement and the 1964 Constitution, which says 'non-Muslim citizens shall be free to perform their rituals within the limits determined by laws for public decency and public peace'.

## **Political Freedoms**

11 October 2001—The Taliban issued edicts prohibiting or severely restricting the most ordinary activities, such as listening to music, publishing, shaving, kite flying and dancing. The government would exact severe punishments for those caught engaging in these activities.

11 October 2002—Afghans have elected a representative interim government through a representative Loya Jirga process. Newspapers, radio and TV have been reborn. Individual and political freedoms are being re-established.

## **Health**

11 October 2001—Although 40 per cent of Afghanistan's doctors are women, the Taliban banned most female doctors from practicing medicine. Male doctors were prohibited from treating women.

11 October 2002—Women doctors have returned to work, and male doctors may treat women once again. Many medical professionals have returned from exile.

Source: *Fact Sheet*, White House, 11 October 2002.

## **Appendix B: Aid to Afghanistan**

Since September 2001, Australia has committed over \$53 million for humanitarian relief and reconstruction. This assistance has been in the form of food aid, measures to restore essential infrastructure, assistance for displaced people, water and sanitation, mine clearance and awareness, emergency medical assistance, immunisation, nutrition, primary education and training.

### **September 2001–June 2002**

- \$14.3 million to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- \$7 million to the World Food Program
- \$4 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross
- \$1.5 million to the International Organisation for Migration
- \$1 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Program for relief operations following the March earthquake
- \$1 million to the United Nations Development Program's Regional Humanitarian Coordinator's Office
- \$1 million to the United Nations Development Program Trust Fund for the Interim Afghan Administration
- \$1 million to Care Australia
- \$750 000 to Australian Volunteers International
- \$500 000 to the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF
- \$500 000 to UN Drug Control Program
- \$500 000 for mine action activities
- \$500 000 to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- \$250 000 to Australian Red Cross
- \$250 000 to Oxfam Community Aid Abroad
- \$250 000 UNICEF Australia

### **July 2002**

- \$4 million for basic education, specifically girls education
- \$1 million for agriculture and drug control
- \$1 million for mine action activities
- \$1.03 million to the International Organisation for Migration for its internal transportation networks
- \$1.1 million to the International Organisation for Migration for the Jangalak Refugee Receiving Centre in Kabul
- \$0.5 million for capacity building in the banking/finance sector
- \$0.5 million will be set aside for emerging priorities

### **August 2002**

- \$7 million to supply Australian wheat to the World Food Program

### **September 2002**

- \$1.5 million to UN Mine Action Program for mine action activities

### **November 2002**

- \$2 million to assist the Afghan government over the next two years to strengthen migration and border control systems
- an initial \$200 000 to enhance the capacity of the Afghan Interior Ministry to conduct identity and nationality checks of people wishing to return home
- \$200 000 to the International Organisation for Migration to establish an employment and training referral service for Afghans after their return
- \$1 million over two years to help restore production of Afghanistan's wheat and maize crops. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre will undertake the project.

Sources: (1) AusAID (2) Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Media Release*, 14 November 2002.

## **Further Information and Updates on Afghanistan**

1. Asian Development Bank (<http://www.adb.org/Afghanistan/default.asp>) has reports on the reconstruction needs of the country.
2. US Department of State (<http://www.state.gov/p/sa/ci/af/>) highlights US efforts in rebuilding Afghanistan and provides links to US government publications.
3. The International Crisis Group (<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=719>) issues periodic reports on Afghanistan.
4. Amnesty International (<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/asa/afghanistan!Open>) and Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/reports/world/afghanistan-pubs.php>) issue regular reports and updates.
5. Reliefweb (<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/ByCountry/Afghanistan?OpenDocument&StartKey=Afghanistan&Expandview>) provides regular updates and links to reports by UN and other agencies regarding the situation in Afghanistan.
6. Development Gateway (<http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/134111/>) is also a source of comprehensive information on Afghanistan.
7. The Embassy of Afghanistan in Australia ([http://www.afghanembassy.net/n\\_news.html](http://www.afghanembassy.net/n_news.html)) provides useful information on developments in Afghanistan.