RUSH TO
REENGAGEMENT IN
AFGHANISTAN

The IFIs' Post-Conflict Agenda

With a Special Focus on
the National Solidarity Program

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BIC
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Executive Summary

Afghanistan’s political chaos in the 1970s culminated in the 1979 Soviet invasion, an event that ensured the country’s seemingly limitless downward trajectory. While the capital Kabul and some major cities for a time remained havens from the slaughter in the countryside, the international community began its exodus from the country. In the 1980s, cities became dependent upon Soviet aid while the countryside depended upon U.S. and Arab assistance. Millions of refugees in neighboring countries received handouts from the rest of the world.

International financial institutions (IFIs) stopped lending to the country in 1979. While there is a global debate on the merits of such assistance, eligibility for assistance generally indicates that there is an internationally recognized government and a measure of stability. The war and continuous turmoil in Afghanistan meant that it was not eligible for such assistance for 23 years, an entire generation.

Following a series of worldwide terrorist attacks from 1993-2001 aimed mostly at American installations and escalating to the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., the U.S. responded to toppling Afghanistan’s Taliban regime in late 2001. Afghanistan and the international community convened in Bonn in December 2001 to choose an interim Afghan government and set the country on a less destructive track. That meeting was followed by a donors conference in Tokyo in January 2002. At that meeting, donors pledged $5.4 billion for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. During these meetings, the international financial institutions with the backing of the U.S. and other Western governments, began exploring business opportunities in Afghanistan.

By 2002, Afghanistan had accumulated arrears of $45 million to the IFIs for loans made in 1979 and earlier. Rather than forgive these debts to a shattered country and begin anew, the IFIs collected the arrears from the international community in 2002 and 2003 (arrears continued to accumulate up to $56.9 million before being paid off) and resumed lending.

This report looks at the types of grant and lending assistance provided to Afghanistan by the IFIs following their reengagement. While reviewing assistance provision, several questions arose, the most important being: Are the IFIs providing thoughtful development assistance or using their influence to drum up business in a barely stable post-conflict environment? Are the main beneficiaries of IFI programs Afghans or international consulting firms and IFIs?

Answers to these questions are not clear-cut and the concerns will remain relevant at least through the intermediate term. In an attempt to better understand IFI reengagement in Afghanistan, therefore, two aspects of IFI-financed programs were studied:

- IFI influence on rapid rewriting of major sectoral policies in the absence of a representative government.
- The World Bank-financed National Solidarity Program, a nationwide program designed to provide communities with block grants for small-scale development projects.

Information was gathered through a desk study of publicly available IFI documentation and interviews in Washington and Kabul with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, non-governmental organizations, UN organizations, the Afghan transitional government, and media organizations.

The study shows mixed results. There is an overwhelming rush to appoint consulting firms to write government policies and provide temporary capacity so that donors can provide funds and then claim progress in reconstructing and developing Afghanistan. But this short-term solution misses the point. Afghans are desperately short of capacity and they should be trained to write their own policies with Afghan, rather than international, interests in mind. Ownership is lacking, and with possible changes in government due to national elections in 2004, some policies may not weather changes in administration. Also, the speed with which some laws, such as investment laws, are being rewritten in favor of the private sector, without guarantees for Afghans, is worrisome.

There is also significant overlap in donor funding. Customs, energy, education, health care and communications are just a few of the sectors where resources from several donors are being committed, though it is sometimes unclear if several donors are funding the same components or whether assistance is well targeted. As the lead agency on several projects, the World Bank sometimes clarifies donor coordination efforts, but at

1 The Ford Foundation has generously provided a grant to BIC to conduct this research and establish an Afghanistan Project. Interviews in Kabul were conducted in October 2003.
2 The Technical Annex of the Emergency Communications Development project is one example.
other times it makes no effort. For example, the documentation for the customs reforms it is financing is woefully inadequate for the implications of the forthcoming project. ADB documentation for some projects is also insufficient to analyze stated project objectives in light of actual budget allocations.

Surprisingly for nearly everyone involved, one of the greatest successes of the new Afghan administration has been the IMF-supported currency exchange to replace old Afghanis with new Afghanis. Despite warnings from skeptics, the exchange went smoothly and for the past year Afghanistan has had a stable currency and little inflation. Also, a complex yet interesting program of national significance, the World Bank-financed National Solidarity Program (NSP), is just coming under implementation. NSP has the potential to bring a level of decision-making to the grassroots level through the delivery of community block grants. Though there are significant challenges in program delivery, it has the potential to reestablish links between the central government and local communities.

This report concludes with a brief analysis of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and the installation of a controversial new ambassador.
IFIs in Afghanistan: Historical Context

Reestablishment of a Legitimate National Authority

Afghans are not unrealistic about the amount of time needed to rebuild their shattered country. After all, it took more than two decades to destroy it. There is now a window of opportunity, however, larger than any that had opened in the past including those following the 1989 Soviet withdrawal, the 1992 fall of Najibullah’s communist government, and the 1996 Taliban takeover of Kabul.

The international community—international financial institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, donor governments, consulting firms, and a few private sector companies—has reestablished a strong and significant presence in Kabul and in some provincial capitals following the U.S. ouster of the Taliban government. UN agencies and NGOs were some of the first on the national scene as they relocated their long-standing Pakistan-based headquarters to the Afghan capital with its critical shortage of telecommunications, power, and water facilities. More than a year later, some are still trying to reach the level of functionality they left behind.

From the Soviet invasion in 1979 to the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, development in Afghanistan had ceased, turning many Afghans into wards of the international community. NGOs, the Red Cross and the UN provided the lifeline throughout, often operating in risky and highly volatile environments. Overall, assistance provision was ad hoc and areas of operation were based on security, NGOs fields of expertise, and often the political affiliations of their own staff members. Moreover permission to operate was negotiated with each community and commander at the local level. National authorities were virtually non-existent.

IFI Reengagement in Afghanistan

All of this changed with the fall of the Taliban and installation of an interim, now transitional, government under the December 2001 Bonn Accord. Suddenly there was a national authority preparing a national budget based on government-identified (though not community-identified) priorities. For the first time in years, the possibility of national programs with at least a medium-term vision became possible. Three large international financial institutions (IFIs), absent for twenty-three years, re-emerged during this period and assumed preeminent positions. The institutions are the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Other influential organizations leading development policy in Afghanistan include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), though this report focuses primarily on the IFIs.

IFI re-engagement comes at a time when the institutions are redefining their development agendas in light of intense criticism following the provision of bad policy advice and numerous failed infrastructure projects with significant negative environmental and social impacts. And as large borrowers such as China and India turn to other sources of financing for controversial development projects, the IFIs are seeking new lines of business. One such possibility is more active engagement in post-conflict reconstruction and development. The World Bank, normally highly risk averse, is justifying the risk it assumes in today’s post-conflict situations as a return to its roots—since it was founded near the end of World War II to provide reconstruction assistance in Europe (a mission it quickly abandoned in the face of a much larger U.S. Marshall Plan). However, today’s post-conflict countries with armed populations do not mirror those of post-War II Europe. Deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan, particularly in the southeastern Pashtun provinces, are of critical concern for everyone working in Afghanistan. These concerns were highlighted by CARE and the Center on International Cooperation in a September 15, 2003 policy brief. The report states that in one year the ratio of armed incidents outside of Kabul to those in Kabul rose from 2:1 to 7:1. This escalation is in areas only marginally under the control of the central government.

IFIs in Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Period

A Seat at the Head Table

The IFIs immediately assumed preeminence and a seat at the Afghan government's planning table in the post-Taliban period. Sectors were divided up and the World Bank and ADB embarked on rapid needs assessment missions. The ADB prepared reports on agriculture, education, the environment, and transportation while the World Bank targeted livelihoods, fiscal management, governance and public administration, and private sector development. The IMF studied rehabilitation of the central bank and the Ministry of Finance. After six weeks the IFIs were proposing new government policies based on data that was rough at best. The Afghan Interim Administration had to work closely with these institutions to devise new policies as it needed to secure hundreds of millions of dollars in financing. With annual revenues a paltry $150 million and recurrent costs for government (including civil servant salaries) some $250 million, the fledgling government was and remains desperate for funds to provide basic services to claim legitimacy.

Me First: Arrears Repayment to IFIs

The IFIs insisted that as a condition of renewed lending assistance following the 2001 Bonn Accord, Afghanistan had to clear its arrears to them. Afghanistan began defaulting on its debt service to the IFIs and others after the 1979 Soviet invasion, though the government continued making some payments until the communist government was overthrown in 1992. Since the Taliban literally looted the vaults as the government fell in 2001, the international community, notably the Japan, the UK, Sweden, Norway, Italy and several other donors—through Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) donations—began paying off the arrears to the IFIs, setting arrears of $56.9 million by February 2003. Continuing debt service to these three institutions to cover the remaining pre-1979 loans is covered by ARTF funds, conveniently administered by the World Bank and skimmed off the top before the remaining funds are made available to the Afghan government.

Ironically, the World Bank in its 2003 Transitional Support Strategy (TSS) states that "Another risk, which could impact on World Bank financial assistance to Afghanistan, would materialize if forgiveness of bilateral debts is less generous than hoped, reducing the debt sustainability of planned/pledged concessional lending to Afghanistan by IFIs." (Emphasis as in the TSS.) Apparently bilateral donors must continue to empty their coffers to fill those of the IFIs. While IFI debt service as of September 1, 2003 using ARTF funds totaled $5.6 million, a small percentage of ARTF funds, the IFIs' insistence that arrears and continuing debt service be paid to them first is unconscionable, especially as they actively seek out new business opportunities in shattered post-conflict countries.

Back in Business

The IFIs are back in business in Afghanistan. While an in depth analysis of each IFI-financed activity is beyond the scope of this first report, initial trends and major programs will be highlighted. The tables on the following page provide a brief summary of assistance amounts—dividing them into grants and loans. Looking broadly at the assistance provided, IFI involvement affects all major sectors in Afghanistan—from power and water to health and education, to transport and the private sector. Governance and administration are being shaped by new policies and the involvement of Western consulting firms at senior levels of government.

Most project documents list 'policy reform' and 'capacity building' among the objectives. With a glaring lack of capacity in many ministries due to protracted war, the past assassinations and flight of the educated class, and the disruption of education, especially higher education, capacity building is a core necessity. However, policy...
reform and capacity building are being addressed in a manner that suits donors, not Afghans. Numerous international consulting firms have been contracted to fill the capacity vacuum for such things as procurement, financial administration, customs and banking reform. While these international consultants\(^\text{11}\) give donors confidence in the ability of the 'government' to manage the funds, the policies are written first and staff is later, maybe, trained to follow these policies—rather than having their capacity developed to enable them to write the policies in the first place.

Most of the rush comes from the donor-driven agenda of spending money to show project 'progress'—a chronic shortcoming of the IFIs and many donor governments.

\(^{10}\) JSDF: Japan Social Development Fund grants support community development.

\(^{11}\) Several sources stated that each international consultant costs about $400,000 including tax-free salary, housing, benefits, and security. Author interviews, Kabul, October 2003.

\(^{12}\) JFPR: Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction is an ADB-managed trust fund supported by Japan. Funds are generally for poverty alleviation and social development programs. They are allocated at the discretion of the ADB.
There is also a rush to "count" the progress in Afghanistan by focusing on schools, clinics, and kilometers of road rehabilitated. During interviews with aid agencies in Afghanistan, however, after security, the number one critical issue cited for every organization was a lack of capacity—within their own organization, partner organizations, and the government. Without addressing the lack of capacity in a realistic time frame and finding a way for the country to train a range of mid-level professionals including bureaucrats, accountants, managers, agronomists, professors, engineers, and doctors, new policies will have little long-lasting impact since they will not be meaningful to those tasked with implementing them. Currently, the NGO 'sector' has the best trained staff since it has had twenty years to train and develop a cadre of professionals. However many NGO staff have been lured to embassy, UN, and some government positions with higher pay. The Ministry of Finance has also proposed hiring 5,000 NGO staff to work in the government and to prepare for national elections, currently scheduled for June 2004. Such a move would seriously undermine the effectiveness of NGOs, the main implementing agencies for many social programs that the government is unable to deliver.

Reformulation of Sector Policies

It is almost impossible to determine where government policies begin and IFI influence ends. When significant USAID influence is added to the mix the lines overlap everywhere. IFI project documentation implies that nearly every sectoral policy in Afghanistan was so off-base that it is amazing the country ever functioned at all. Policies now being fractionally rewritten relate to banking, private sector investment, energy and mining, customs, and transit trade.

While many policies and laws are outdated and many had been Sovietized and Talibanized, the rush for foreign consultants to rewrite them all immediately is worrisome. The government remains a transitional government until elections, currently scheduled for 2004, and policies should be written with the voice of Afghans, not foreign powers in mind. The last time a foreign power used such a heavy hand many advisors, including their family members, were brutally murdered in a revolt and thousands more troops later died in battle.\(^5\) While the current situation does not mirror that leading up to the Soviet occupation, it is dangerous to rewrite Afghanistan's policies without broader support and a truly representative government since the next administration could simply reject the new measures.

The IMF reports that the Afghan government is committed to financial stability to support reconstruction and economic recovery and adds that "The economy would be based on liberal and open markets, led by private sector activity with low state intervention."\(^6\) Citing the need to increase economic activity, the Afghan government promulgated a new Law on Domestic and Foreign Private Investment in Afghanistan in October 2002. If approved, the law would expedite the investment process, grant tax waivers based on term of investment, exempt some exports from taxes, and allow for tax-free repatriation of funds.\(^7\) The Afghan government has also established the Afghan Investment Support Agency, a one-stop-shop for investment information and licensing.

While private sector development is clearly important for Afghanistan, the rush to rewrite laws in favor of the private sector and increased transit trade does not take into consideration the current state of development in Afghanistan (discussed in greater detail in the following sections). There appears to be no guarantee that Afghans will benefit from such business activity. Companies would be encouraged but not required to hire Afghan nationals. The requirements that foreign investors deposit $50,000 to obtain a commercial license and domestic investors deposit half the value of the proposed investment have also been waived, making it easier for unscrupulous businessmen to abscond, leaving workers and vendors unpaid. There are also 80 dysfunctional state enterprises, but even if they are poorly managed, they are still assets of the people that should not be auctioned off as in Russia to make a few individuals wealthy. New investment laws also make no guarantees that privatized industries, even if foreign owned, do not simply take advantage of tax breaks to repatriate all profits rather than invest even a portion of them in Afghanistan. There is also significant renewed interest in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline and creating an environment suitable for such an investment. Contrary to the claims of oil companies and governments, however, there are few examples of oil and gas pipelines providing long-term benefits to local communities.

When reviewing World Bank project documentation for Afghanistan generally, there were a few anomalies. For example, funding for sectoral policy reforms for water supply and sanitation, urban services, power,

\(^{13}\) Revolts against Soviet advisors and their families began in the 'peaceful' city of Herat in March 1979 and spread.

\(^{14}\) IMF, pg. 8.

\(^{15}\) Pipelines, telecommunications infrastructure, oil and gas, mines and minerals, and heavy industries would be covered under separate legislation.
telecoms, transport, mining, oil and gas were buried in project documentation for emergency infrastructure reconstruction.10 Emergency reconstruction and policy advice are normally two separate issues requiring separate discussions. Under World Bank policy OP 8.50 for emergency projects, however, funds tend to be faster disbursing and Bank staff is allowed to expedite project processing, thereby pushing through policy revisions without broader input.

Coordination with other donors is also unclear at times and it is difficult to determine if donor funds are overlapping or whether they are actually funding different components of the same project. For example, the World Bank, often the lead donor, is preparing a $30 million customs reform project for January 2004 approval. USAID has allocated $1.2 million to customs operation and administration and is working through the international firm Bearing Point. The U.K. is funding the Adam Smith Institute to provide customs reform advice.11 The first tranche of an ADB $150 million multisector program loan includes support for reforms in the Ministry of Finance and a review of customs procedures.12 The IMF is monitoring customs reform work and making additional suggestions. Furthermore, a project concept note by the Afghan government for the World Bank-financed customs reform project suggests that the EU, GTZ13 and Saudi Arabia may also provide cofinancing. There are also four British customs officers sent by the Blair government to assist the Kabul airport and customs house. One would hope that these overlapping donor activities will be further elaborated in overarching World Bank project documentation, but the inadequate two-page project information document (PID) currently available barely provides a project summary even as the January board approval date looms. With so many donors for customs reform, each with their own interests and attached strings, the Afghan government may have to make an effort to put its interests first. There is similar overlapping assistance for other sectors as well.

The World Bank in Afghanistan

Big and Back

The World Bank maintained a “Watching Brief” on Afghanistan during the 1980s and 1990s. Developments were monitored from Islamabad, Pakistan and some assistance was provided to Afghans living in refugee camps. World Bank support during this time was primarily for education and studies on food security, landmines, and the economy. Compared to NGOs and UN agencies working in Afghanistan, the Bank was one step removed, but the Watching Brief gave the Bank a start when the time for reengagement arrived.

In early 2002, the World Bank was selected to administer the multi-donor Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) that supports mostly civil servant salaries, police training under the UNDP-administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), a few investment projects, and an Afghan expatriates program.14 ARTF funds are separate from World Bank grant and lending assistance to Afghanistan. World Bank grants and loans support public administration, education, health, community development, employment, communications, transport and other infrastructure. The Bank targets sectors that most would agree are critical for basic development, though there is criticism of the Bank’s approach.

Several NGOs voiced concern regarding the Bank’s support to change health sector policies in Afghanistan. Health care with World Bank support will now be contracted out to NGOs based on three-year agreements with the possibility of bonuses for good results. The government and the World Bank say that this arrangement will improve service delivery, though NGOs are worried about what will happen in three years if the government cannot fund the clinics on its own. It will either have to borrow more money, or the clinics will close. NGOs suggested that a safer approach initially would be to build capacity in the Ministry of Health to ensure it knows how to deliver health care. This privatization of health services also destroys some of the links the ministry has

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10 See the Technical Annex for the Emergency Infrastructure Reconstruction Project. Available at: <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/ WDSContentServer?repname=000090940_022521059509&dueDate=0>

11 Both Bearing Point and the Adam Smith Institute have offices in the Finance Ministry.


13 European Union (EU) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) or German Technical Cooperation.

14 For additional details, see IBC’s Afghanistan Web pages.
with communities since this was the only ministry that functioned to a reasonable level throughout the wars and the Taliban period. There has also been talk of privatizing educational services in the same manner.

NGOs are also concerned about the 'contracting' approach to service provision where in some cases NGOs would not be reimbursed until services were 'satisfactorily' delivered. As non-profit organizations, NGOs do not have a cushion of profits which could absorb losses if the government or an IFI rated an NGO's performance 'unsatisfactory.' Would withdrawal from a project area due to perceived insecurity constitute 'unsatisfactory' performance? NGOs wanted more clarity before agreeing to take such risks.

While the privatization of services could improve social services, the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) recommends caution at this stage. AREU points out that the initial rapid assessments that were carried out in late 2001 are now dated. Significantly more information is now available and policy changes should rely upon updated assessments even if additional time and resources are required to gather this data. In a somewhat similar vein, the Afghan government has embarked on a recasting exercise. The rapid assessment will re-estimate the amount needed for reconstruction, especially for human development, infrastructure and security during the next five years. The government has asked the World Bank to lead donor assessment efforts and report in January 2004, prior to a February 2004 donors conference.

The Asian Development Bank in Afghanistan

$150 Million Twins

The ADB proudly announced on December 5, 2002 that it had resumed lending to Afghanistan. The first loan was a $150 million Post-Conflict Multisector Program Loan to support capacity-building in the ministries and policy revision, both difficult to monitor. The second $150 million loan, Emergency Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Reconstruction, supports infrastructure rehabilitation for essential roads, power and gas supplies. Project documentation reveals, however, some 85 per cent of project funds are slated to go to foreign contractors through international competitive bidding (ICB). The ADB Afghanistan Country Director stated that a number of Afghans will be hired under the various subprojects, though confirming the level of local hires is difficult.

In addition to the actual road rehabilitation and construction, broader regional impacts from this component are expected. Road completion under the project will open up two transit corridors both originating in Central Asia with one heading west to Iran and the other east to Pakistan. A Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction will finance the heavily traveled Kandahar-Spin Boldak road on the Pakistan border. While these routes are expected to generate transit and customs revenues, they can also work against the best interests of Afghanistan if cheap goods are dumped in local markets. This has profound implications for the development of Afghan industry that, with the exception of handicrafts, carpets and dried fruits, is nascent at best. The IMF reports that the 80 state-owned enterprises are not profitable or even self-sustaining. With a lack of protection for domestic industries and the signing of a trade agreement at the World Bank's 2003 annual meetings in Dubai by Afghanistan, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Afghanistan's current and future industrialists have much to fear. China's and India's powerhouse economies are not far and their ability to flood Afghanistan's markets and hamper future industrial development should be recognized now.

The opening up of the regional transit corridors also coincides with USAID, World Bank, ADB and IMF assistance in customs reform as noted earlier. In addition to standardizing customs procedures, exchange rates and valuations countrywide, customs reform is seen as a way

21 This "output-based aid" (OBA) approach was clearly articulated in the World Bank's controversial Private Sector Development Strategy. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/privatesector/>.

22 CARE published a report in 2002 on the per capita aid expenditures in several post-conflict countries. While donors committed an average of $250 per person in other countries, assistance for Afghanistan averaged $42 per person over five years. This discrepancy has been highlighted, prompting an evaluation of need on a per capita basis in Afghanistan. Available at: <http://www.carers.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/09302002_policybrief.pdf>.


24 The $15 million grant is entitled Road Employment Project for Settlement and Integration of Returning Refugees and Displaced Persons. ADB claims that refugees returning from Pakistan will benefit, though the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) charged with protecting refugees stated in an October interview that they had not been consulted on this project—a serious omission by ADB.
to increase domestic revenue. These reforms together with the opening up of new trade routes suggest an emphasis on generating transit revenue as in the 'glory' days when the area that became Afghanistan was a critical pathway on the Silk Route. Again, little if any mention is made of how these reforms and improved infrastructure can harm domestic industrial development.

Also on the list of ADB assistance are several technical assistance grants. The grants generally support the ADB-financed reform agenda and infrastructure rehabilitation. An exception is the Regional Gas Pipeline TA that finances a feasibility study for the long-contested Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan natural gas pipeline project. Not a new idea, the proposed pipeline was the subject of intense competition by Argentinean Bridas and American UNOCAL in the 1990s, though all activities ground to a halt in 1998 when the U.S. launched air strikes on terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan.

With numerous vested interests encouraging the restart of the pipeline project, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan formed a coalition for project implementation in May 2002. India was invited to join in February 2003 since, according to some reports, the pipeline is not economically feasible without India's agreement to purchase gas. India declined to participate in the project, however, fearing dependence upon arch-rival Pakistan across which the gas would flow. According to sources at the ADB, there were differing views at senior government levels on whether or not India should participate in the project and in the end, those in opposition prevailed. The pipeline feasibility study was completed in October 2003 and released to the relevant governments.

The International Monetary Fund in Afghanistan

New Money for a New Beginning

Probably the most significant IFI achievement to date in Afghanistan has been the introduction of a replacement currency, the new Afghani, with IMF assistance. The government needed to replace the official and counterfeit currencies in circulation, a politically and logistically difficult operation in a country lacking functioning banks and armored vehicles. The old Afghani was highly eroded with about Af 40,000 equaling one dollar. Bags of cash were required for some transactions. Despite words of caution from the IMF, the government went ahead relatively quickly with estimating the value of the Afghani in circulation, organizing the printing of new currency, setting a target exchange rate, and restricting the central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, from financing the government budget. The exchange of currency took place from October 7, 2002 to January 2, 2003 and went relatively smoothly. The exchange rate has remained relatively stable since then and now is about Af 48 to the dollar.

The IMF is also advising on the modernization of Da Afghanistan Bank, the central bank, and the preparation of new financial sector legislation including banking laws. The actual technical assistance is being funded by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the U.S. through USAID, the U.K through DFID, and Germany through GTZ.

Afghan Civil Society

The Weakest Link

The fabric of Afghan civil society is torn, but it is not beyond repair. Despite years of brutal warfare, the physical displacement of millions of people across and within Afghanistan's borders, and the loss of national assets—human, physical, and cultural, Afghans amazingly maintain an air of optimism. In conversation, most express hope for a brighter future and once again many have put aside previous disappointments such as their abandonment by much of the international community, especially the U.S., following the 1989 Soviet withdrawal.

There are a few Afghan civil society organizations focusing on human rights, women's rights, democracy, and freedom of the press. There are also Afghan NGOs implementing reconstruction and development projects with bilateral and multilateral funding. It is difficult for...
such organizations to develop capacity, however, since it is easier for well-educated Afghans to join an international organization and immediately earn a salary than nurture to maturity a fledgling organization during uncertain times with uncertain funding. The Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau (ANCB), a coordinating body founded originally in 1991 in Pakistan that tries to build the capacity of Afghan NGOs, noted in an interview that Afghan NGOs were having difficulty developing even though organizations were now based in Afghanistan. Afghans who would like to build up civil society and advocacy groups are faced with the reality of providing for their families. Most, therefore, are forced to choose the security of higher paying jobs with international organizations over building up local, Afghan, organizations.

Afghan organizations that have fared best are those implementing development projects such as the Afghan Development Association, Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan and Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, and those representing women's issues. For example the Revolutionary Afghan Women's Association (RAWA), founded in 1977, advocates for women's rights and democracy, though its approach may be more combative and secular than that with which many Afghan women are comfortable. Another strong Afghan voice comes from the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). Though technically a government commission, the AIHRC has been extremely vocal in advocating that human rights guarantees be included in the draft constitution and vague language appealing conservative Islamists be minimized. International NGOs also have been active in promoting the rights of Afghans through policy briefs. In 2003, twelve Afghan and international NGOs joined together to form the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium.

Overseas Afghans also count their voices as Afghan voices and many have set up organizations to channel donations to Afghanistan. While it is difficult to measure the impact that these organizations have upon Afghanistan, diaspora voices are often loudly heard in Western capitals where foreign policy and foreign economic policy are determined.

Not many Afghans are aware of what IFI reengagement means for them, however. Most see any foreign assistance as a gift, sometimes unwanted, over which they have little control. Few Afghans understand that not all IFI assistance is grant assistance and in ten years' time will have to begin repaying IFI loans. Non-government Afghan voices are too often absent from the decision-making process, especially in today's fast-paced decision-making environment. The Afghan director of one organization training village leaders in the principles of democracy stated that he wished the World Bank, with whom he had consulted during rapid needs assessment missions in early 2002, had been clearer on that the assistance provision was to be a mix of grants and loans. Even with his close association, the type and conditions of assistance had not been obvious.

Feature: NSP — National Solidarity or NGO Sandwich Program?

National Solidarity Program

At present, the most complicated and high stakes IFI-financed program in Afghanistan is the World Bank-financed National Solidarity Program (NSP). NSP will fund community block grants of up to $60,000 based on funding of $200 per family. Projects are to be selected by elected community development committees. Phase I of the program is just getting underway and is being piloted in three districts in nearly all of Afghanistan's 32 provinces. About 7,000 villages are being targeted in the initial phase.

Pilot districts were chosen based on two sets of data: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refugee return figures and World Food Program (WFP) vulnerability assessment and mapping (VAM) reports. It was thought that districts with high rates of refugee return and food insecurity, particularly following the recent three-year drought, were the most vulnerable and should be targeted first. Though there is some concern about the accuracy of the figures used in both reports, it is recognized that these were the best figures available upon which to base decisions for district selection. Organizations were asked to bid on service provision in the target districts. During contract negotiations with the twenty-one NGOs and one UN agency selected, a handful of target districts were changed, justification being security concerns or an

26 Author interview, Kabul, October 13, 2003.

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organization’s lack of facilities in a target district. Under this program, the NGOs and UN agencies are referred to as facilitating partners.

A large $22 million grant was allocated to set up the program. Funding for the first block grants is expected to be made available in mid-December 2003, assuming the Bank’s Board of Directors approves a pending $95 million loan. Overall estimates by the government for program implementation through 2007 are $800 million, including follow-up grants to some communities. The U.K.’s Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (EC), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Danish Foreign Ministry and other donors have expressed interest in providing bilateral funding for the program. The program is managed by the Afghan government’s Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development with substantial support from the World Bank.

The Major Players in NSP

The Government: The Government of Afghanistan needs NSP to succeed to establish credibility at the local level and restore fractured links between the center and communities. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is responsible for the program’s output, though they have in turn contracted facilitating partners to implement the program. The government has announced this program nationwide—raising the hopes of communities—and put itself in a position where it must deliver.

An important feature of the NSP is the community development committee election process. Each geographic region of a community is to be represented on the council by a resident of that section of the community. This provides the opportunity for less influential and poorer groups to be involved in decision-making. The election process also has broader implications for the country, the government hopes. Such elections, that are supposed to include men and women and be conducted by secret ballot, are thinly veiled precursors to national elections scheduled for June 2004. Initial results are promising since villagers in Herat said, “we have not experienced any similar election throughout our lives here in our villages.” And another person added, “Next time we should elect our president this way.”

Risks: There is an element of mistrust of the central government by rural communities. Central government “outreach” to rural areas in the 1970s by Kabul’s communist regime led to revolt in the conservative countryside and the 1979 Soviet invasion. Some communities also fear that the central government will use information about villagers gained during establishment of representative committees to conduct conscription into the national army.

Another risk could come from within the MRRD, the ministry responsible for NSP outcomes. Poorly paid government staff, earning on average less than the equivalent of forty U.S. dollars a month, may resent better paid facilitating partner and oversight consultant staff. Provincial MRRD staff is required to work alongside staff of other organizations, but with glaring salary inequalities, it may be difficult to motivate them to assume full team player roles to carry this project forward.

There is also the risk that the government will not be able to attract the $800 million required (initial estimates) to deliver the program nationwide. For credibility, the government has to ensure program delivery in every village at least once. Facilitating partners recommend that the program be on-going, with smaller follow-up grants to keep community development councils functioning and to maintain links at the grassroots level. The $800 million estimate includes follow-up grants to some communities of $90 million. These figures assume no cost overruns nor significant security hurdles in program delivery.

The World Bank: There are numerous rumors as to who actually initiated the NSP program. Some say it was the World Bank, others say the Finance Minister; others have heard it was the Minister of Rural Reconstruction and Development, and a community in Panjshir claims the government got the idea after meeting with them. Regardless of NSP’s origins, the initial project design was based on a World Bank community development project in Indonesia. The program was modified for implementation in Afghanistan, but the initial iteration of the project was resoundingly rejected in early 2003 by the organizations asked to implement it.

The government insisted, however, that this project had to go forward. The World Bank appointed a new

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80 UN-Habitat, “National Solidarity Program: Monthly Report No. 3,” August 2003. (UN-Habitat is further along in the NSP process than other facilitating partners.)

81 Panjshir is the birthplace of Tajik leader Ahmad Shah Masoud, the Northern Alliance resistance commander immortalized in life and in death for his ability to stave off the ever-changing enemy over the years.

82 Told to AINA news service and repeated during an October 13, 2003 interview with the author.

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The Bank also failed or did a poor job of explaining to the facilitating partners the logic behind the negative list of projects ineligible for block grants. The list is based primarily on the Bank’s environmental and social safeguard policies that direct the Bank to avoid and mitigate negative impacts on humans and the environment. A brief introduction to these policies would have provided justification for the negative list, since some communities might take rejection of some projects as a personal rejection of their priorities.

Oversight Consultant: A GTZ-ADAM team was selected by MRRD as Oversight Consultant to work closely with the government. As such, they are responsible for appraising community projects, disbursing block grants, overseeing facilitating partners, monitoring and evaluating five percent of projects, and building MRRD capacity. Oversight Consultant project approval will depend upon project feasibility and the potential for government support if communities vote for schools or health clinics and government staff is required.

Initially, a critical and significant portion of the Oversight Consultant’s work will involve the timely disbursement of community block grants. There are currently conflicting reports on exactly how the block grants will be transferred. Afghanistan’s banking system is non-functional, through a new banking law enacted in September 2003 allows for the establishment of new commercial banks. Until they are up and running, the possibility of transferring funds through Da Afghanistan Bank, the central bank, is a possibility in a handful of provinces. Also proposed and generally agreed to be more practical is the banka system run by local currency exchange dealers. Since commissions will be paid on funds transfers, both the banks and currency exchange dealers have an interest in how funds are transferred.


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Risks: The Oversight Consultant was not appointed until September 2003. It must now set up 32 provincial offices and staff them. Critically, each office requires an engineer to appraise small-scale infrastructure projects and a desperate search is being conducted to fill those positions. A lack of qualified staff risks delays in project appraisal and approval and would damage the government’s credibility. The Oversight Consultant has said it will not push staff from facilitating partners because their ability to implement will be impacted. But

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Project manager who knows Afghanistan and the rejection resulted in the start of a negotiation process that brought the two sides—facilitating partners and the World Bank/MRRD—together during a series of discussions to refine and better articulate the program. In the process, implementation guidelines underwent two revisions (and more are expected as implementation gets underway) and there is now general agreement on objectives and the mode of implementation. UN-Habitat especially worked closely with the World Bank and government to prepare guidelines based on similar community development work they were doing. There are still some grey areas, one of the most frequently mentioned issues being support for income-generation projects. Communities would like support for income-generation activities, though the guidelines are unclear about whether such activities can be supported. NGOs report that the Bank is not in favor of income-generation projects under NSP. Early indications reveal, however, that when women are asked what types of projects they would like under NSP, they cite income-generation activities such as carpet weaving, animal husbandry and tailoring. Since in some areas it is so difficult to involve women in decision-making, such requests should be heeded.

Risks: To claim successful community development, the World Bank needs the many pieces of the NSP puzzle to fit together as much as the guidelines are unclear about whether such activities can be supported. NGOs report that the Bank is not in favor of income-generation projects under NSP. Early indications reveal, however, that when women are asked what types of projects they would like under NSP, they cite income-generation activities such as carpet weaving, animal husbandry and tailoring. Since in some areas it is so difficult to involve women in decision-making, such requests should be heeded.

NSP requires a reasonable measure of security and stability for implementation, since it involves funds transfers and a certain amount of small-scale infrastructure construction. To date, security constraints have halted the program in just a handful of districts. Stability of the government is also a major factor. The current transitional government is very much in favor of the NSP program and has worked to make it implementable. With elections scheduled for June 2004, the World Bank cannot afford a change in government that does not support NSP.

GTZ, German Technical Cooperation, is a German government corporation providing technical assistance. Development Alternatives Inc.-ADAM is a U.S.-based consulting firm.

Three have already applied for commercial licenses: Standard and Chartered, HSBC, and the Agra Khan Development Bank.

the Oversight Consultant still needs to fill vacant positions.

Additional risks revolve around block grant transfers and administration. With about 7,000 villages receiving transfers in tranches, there will be some 20,000 transfers to execute and monitor during phase one. That figure is expected to increase as the program enters later phases. There are also numerous transfers to the facilitating partners for NSP implementation. The Oversight Consultant does not currently have a large accounting staff on board and as with the vacant engineer positions, it will be difficult to find qualified staff.

To some degree, the Oversight Consultant (though mostly facilitating partners) will face the wrath of communities if their priority projects are not approved. For example, schools and clinic construction will only be supported if the government is able to fund staff and supplies. The Oversight Consultant is relying upon the facilitating partners to vet projects, but projects rejected due to the government’s lack of capacity and inability to provide additional development assistance based on community priorities would set back NSP.

The Oversight Consultant must also improve procurement of items for facilitating partners. One partner already complained that the equipment procured by the government’s procurement agent, U.K. firm Crown Agents, prior to the Oversight Consultant’s appointment are unsuitable. The radios purchased are not compatible with the CODAN radios needed to travel in rural areas and 6 of 13 computers are already dysfunctional.

**Facilitating Partners—21 NGOs and UN-Habitat**

The facilitating partners are the linchpin in the National Solidarity Program. They are sandwiched between and among all other major NSP stakeholders. The facilitating partners are responsible for negotiating the terms of the program with the World Bank and the government and then for working with communities to implement the program. Many facilitating partners have implemented projects in or near the communities in which they will undertake NSP.

Facilitating partners will initially explain the principles of the NSP program to communities, recruit local facilitators to organize the community, and then conduct elections for community development councils. Communities will prioritize their development needs, though the facilitating partner will let them know which projects are on the “negative list.” It is not yet clear, however, who is responsible for asking the ministries and other donors which projects are already planned for a particular area. The Oversight Consultant would reject a duplicate project, but communities are not always aware of what others have planned for them. Facilitating partners are also responsible for reporting quarterly, though the World Bank and Oversight Consultant suggested monthly reporting will soon be required. Even if just one page per community is submitted, however, reports on 7,000 communities will likely overwhelm the Oversight Consultant.

NGOs have basically operated in a vacuum over the past fifteen to twenty years in Afghanistan and many focused on providing humanitarian assistance and life-sustaining services. Some implemented small-scale development projects. Under NSP they are operating through a national framework, a new experience for them in Afghanistan. Many of those interviewed were keen to be part of a national process and said that despite the difficulties of numerous negotiated revisions to project implementation guidelines, they believed the project was good for the country and they were willing to adapt.

**Risks:** Insecurity is the premier risk for facilitating partners, some of whom had staff assassinated in 2003. One country director described NGOs as the “soft underbelly of the international community.” Since the ‘neo-Taliban’s’ policy is to drive out the international community and undermine support for the Karzai government, unarmed aid workers are the easiest target. They are now being deliberately targeted for intimidation and assassination, especially in the southern Pashtun provinces. It is not yet clear when facilitating partners can be excused by the government from working in a district due to security concerns. It is also not clear if money spent in a district then ‘lost’ due to an inability to work can be refunded so that the facilitating partner can take up the program in another district.

Also related to security is local community perception of facilitating partners. NGOs have worked closely with communities for years and are seen as allies. Under NSP, however, some communities have questioned the NGOs’ ‘shift’ in alliance since they are now closely allied with a government program. While NGOs can hardly be described as government agents and they are officially encouraged to use the unique styles of community development they honed over the years, implementing a program of national priority for the government has implications for the perceived independence of NGOs.

Another risk facilitating partners face is that any glitches in the program—whether due to delays in block grant transfers by the Oversight Consultant, rejection of a project proposal because the government cannot provide a teacher or doctor, or the lack of availability of a contractor in a remote area—will be blamed upon the
facilitating partner. Some facilitating partners will also be constrained by restrictions upon the movement of women. In some areas, female community organizers can travel in the same car as male colleagues, though in more conservative areas they must travel in separate cars—incurring additional logistical costs.

Facilitating partners are also constrained by logistics and seasons that pose special challenges. Some communities are extremely remote, sometimes a walk of a day or more from a road. Reaching these communities by a combination of vehicle, donkey and on foot is difficult and expensive. There will also be a rush to work quickly during the few summer months when these villages are actually accessible. In some remote areas, facilitating partners will be the only organization able to provide contracting services. While this may be seen as a conflict of interest, it is a reality that is recognized and accepted by the government and facilitating partners.

Facilitating partners are also pressured by all other stakeholders in the NSP program. The government is rushing them to show results before national elections, the World Bank wants a successful project and needs to disburse funds according to a timeline, the Oversight Consultant is understaffed and adding a bureaucratic layer, and communities have high expectations. The facilitating partners are key at nearly every stage in the process and some are concerned that they will be pressured to move communities along too quickly, especially if more time is needed to increase the participation of women or encourage more creative approaches to development.

Communities: Communities are expected to benefit from the NSP program and the process. There was initial concern that the election of a separate development council, especially when most communities already had a council of elders, would make it difficult to work in some communities, but elections to date have reportedly gone well. It was also reported by UN-Habitat that in some communities, women voted with men and turned out to vote in greater numbers. Some elders from traditional councils who were not elected to the development councils have tried appealing to provincial governors to get the results overturned, though so far the governors have not interfered in the composition of any council—though some have complained on behalf of their constituents to the government.

With the exception of UN-Habitat which has a head start in program implementation, most facilitating partners are still working to hire and train social organizers at the provincial level and conduct elections at the local level. Furthermore, block grant funding will not be available until early 2004. Once communities begin receiving block grants, additional details about program implementation will be reported in later BIC reports.

Risks: Communities may find too many hurdles in program delivery. Community Development Council members are volunteers. They are responsible for prioritizing projects based on community input, getting bids and selecting contractors, receiving funds and paying contractors, and sometimes transporting materials from far away markets. Aspects of the program for some communities will involve distant and difficult travel. Events in Afghanistan do not always go as planned either, with some trips being undertaken more than once. Communities and individuals must feel they are benefiting from the program, not being sent on a wild goose chase. They also must understand that while block grant totals are based on $200 per family, they have a maximum value of $60,000. Therefore communities over 300 families may feel cheated by the program.

Communities are also expected to fill out 13-page project proposal forms and each village development council member must sign or place a thumbprint on the form. A similar list of signatures/thumbprints is required for each financial transaction. A facilitating partner stated that this was onerous, since each council has a president, vice-president and treasurer who in theory have been entrusted with carrying out such transactions.

There was also some concern about the participation of refugees residing in Pakistan and Iran. In villages where refugees had returned, their inclusion was not an issue and they were equally involved in the process. In villages where they were expected to return, families were supposed to be counted in the process. Although this leaves some room for abuse, taking the risk of including these families was seen as facilitating return. Though the oral news wire is quite good in Afghanistan, not all distant refugees will have news of programs in their villages. It will be important to monitor in NSP projects the inclusion of those refugees who return after program implementation.

NSP Overall

The facilitating partners may bemoan the bureaucratic and logistical difficulties of the NSP program, but with few exceptions, they stated that the overwhelming enthusiasm of communities for this program ignited their own enthusiasm. While the program has numerous risks that could cause it to fail, those tend to be outweighed by the potential benefits and initial community enthusiastic.
U.S. Policy in Afghanistan

Spending Money

It is impossible to discuss developments in Afghanistan without mentioning U.S. policy, though it is difficult to figure out exactly what it is. U.S. policy is directed from Washington and run from the ultra-secure U.S. Embassy in Kabul which so effectively cuts off links with the rest of the country that it may as well be in Washington too. U.S. government perception that Americans walking the streets of Kabul would be in grave danger is too cautious a view since it hinders program implementation and understanding of local dynamics. While there are risks for everyone working in Afghanistan, including non-official Americans exercising due caution when working in the country have not faced unusual security threats because they are Americans.

The U.S. wants to prevent Afghanistan from sliding back into a scenario where terrorist training camps dot the landscape, but it allocates twenty times the resources for security to Iraq even though Afghanistan has a larger population and was home to numerous terrorist training camps. U.S. troops are at war in southern Afghanistan fighting neo-Taliban elements trying to destabilize the U.S.-backed Karzai government. The U.S. is also providing humanitarian and other assistance. In 2002 assistance totaled $815.9 million, about 41 percent of which went for non-humanitarian support such as Afghan military training, counter-narcotics, anti-terrorism and peacekeeping. In 2003, $817 million was initially allocated of which some 10 percent was for non-humanitarian assistance.8

In late 2003, another $1.2 billion was approved and $100 million was reallocated.9 This $1.6 billion is referred to as "accelerated" assistance that is to be spent rapidly with program delivery deadlines of Summer 2004, conveniently just before the U.S. presidential election. At a November 2003 Afghanistan America summit at Georgetown, U.S. government officials referred repeatedly to the scheduled elections in Afghanistan, neglecting to mention that there are serious concerns about the timeframe and ability for those elections to be free and fair. To meet Afghan, not U.S., objectives, the U.S. should reconsider its insistence on pushing Afghans to the polls in an unstable and insecure environment. Under such conditions, the powerful warlords wield enough influence to gain seats in the government and 'legitimacy'

The American author of this report was personally horrified by the Iranian chicken coup in which embassy and USAID visitors were detained and the military 
language directed to and about visitors and non-American entities. Threatening her arrival to 15 with machine-gunning warring ấy the means and ends" only.


through elections. A recent policy brief by the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit supports this view and argues that there is "significant risk that elections held before key conditions are in place will actually do more harm than good."[60]

The U.S. also wants other donors to speed up assistance. It is not speed that will improve Afghanistan, however, but sound investments. The rush to "complete" the U.S.-financed Kabul-Kandahar road by December 31, 2003 means that the road will have only a temporary surface, rather than the more permanent surface initially promised. Schools and clinics can also be built in a few weeks, but training the teachers and doctors needed and funding their salaries and equipment require committed long-term funding and a scaling up process over time.

American policy is a mix of war on terrorism and supporting Afghan police and national army training. Aid assistance on its own terms; and policy revisions that will likely benefit foreign, including American, businesses. The number one concern of all Afghans, however, is and has been for personal security (the same security concerns that keep Americans locked behind the walls of the U.S. Embassy). It has taken nearly two years for this very clear demand, articulated by Afghans at all levels, to begin to be addressed. This demand comes before requests for schools, clinics, agricultural support and privatization programs but those with influence and decision-making power have been slow in responding. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been effective in securing Kabul, but the U.S. and Europe have dragged their feet in mobilizing this NATO-led force to expand beyond Kabul. Finally in October 2003, NATO agreed to send ISAF troops in the form of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Kunduz, a relatively peaceful northern province. It is hoped by Afghans and aid workers that the expansion is a first step, with additional provincial deployments coming soon.

An official at the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission was in favor of extended security forces, but not in the form of relatively small Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that would do small-scale humanitarian assistance projects and collect intelligence — unless PRT deployment signaled the beginning of a larger security presence. The official added that there are enough NGOs in the country to do humanitarian assistance projects and that one-off PRT projects with no follow-up are of little benefit. A former civilian PRT member also added that the lack of cultural sensitivity in some PRT units sometimes strains relations between PRTs and communities.

New Ambassador: Whose side is he on?

The U.S. Ambassador-designate to Afghanistan is Afghan-American Zalmay Khalilzad.[53] Appointing an Afghan-American to be a representative to his native country appears to raise a potential conflict of interest. Further questions arise when noting that during the 1980s Khalilzad was executive director of Friends of Afghanistan, a U.S.-based organization that actively supported the most religiously conservative, anti-Soviet mujahideen. Those mujahideen included groups receiving significant Arab and Pakistani support, leading to the rise of Osama Bin Laden and warlords currently at odds with the Karzai government.

American officials working in Kabul are now wondering what their role is since Khalilzad conducts policy meetings in Dari rather than English. Afghans are also puzzled by the selection. One influential local businessman referred to Khalilzad as America's 'Chief Dog Washer', while others are calling him 'The Viceroy of Kabul'. An Afghan woman stated that Khalilzad will have little credibility with Afghans since they will always be wondering whose side he is on. She would have preferred that the U.S. send a decision-maker who clearly represented U.S. policy and U.S. interests rather than someone who in her opinion would play both sides of an issue.

Khalilzad also has petroleum corporation connections and was involved with UNOCAL's attempts to negotiate and assess the risks of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) pipeline route during the Taliban period. With the ADB's finalization of yet another TAP pipeline feasibility study in October 2003, the Afghans and the rest of the world can begin to guess what underlying U.S. policy will be once the schools, clinics, and kilometers of road have been counted.

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[61] PRTs are military teams, with a handful of civilians, who build small-scale infrastructure projects. Since they are armed, NGOs fear that they will be mistaken for these armed groups, putting them in danger of attack. ACDIR, an international and local NGO coordinating body in Afghanistan, also notes that PRTs are too small to provide provincial security or any significant reconstruction assistance. Report available at: <http://www.careinternational.org.uk/cp-bin/display_mediarelease.cfm?nr_id=228>.
[53] It is expected that the U.S. Senate will confirm his nomination before the end of November 2003.
[65] When Afghans heard that some of their companions who had emigrated to the West could only find jobs as 'dog washers' (i.e. in dog grooming parlors) they began using this term to refer to Westernized Afghans who serve the interests of the West.


