PAKTIKA PROVINCE AFGHANISTAN

REPORT OF THE
PAKTIKA EMERGENCY TASKFORCE

PESHAWAR
AUGUST 1990
PAKTIKA TASKFORCE REPORT

INDEX

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

SECTION 2. SOCIAL & POWER STRUCTURE
A. Tribal
B. Commanders
C. Shuras

SECTION 3. AGENCIES - ACTIVITIES
A. Agency Activities
B. Methods of Consultation
C. Areas of Concern

SECTION 4. RECENT SECURITY INCIDENTS
A. Angur Ada Incidents July/August 1990
   Background & Analysis
B. Summary of other Incidents & Critical Areas

SECTION 5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS
A. Conclusions
B. Recommendations

APPENDICES
1. LIST OF COOPERATING AGENCIES
2. KEY SHURAS & BAZAARS - MAP & NOTES
3. AGENCY ACTIVITIES - MAP & NOTES
4. COMMERCIAL TRUCKING INFORMATION
PAKTIKA TASKFORCE

This report and concluding recommendations have been prepared for consideration by the second joint UN/NGO Emergency Meeting on Paktika to be held in Peshawar on 20th August 1990.

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It should be noted that all general references to "agencies" in this document relate equally to United Nations and Non-Governmental organisations operational in Paktika at this time.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Over a period of two weeks at the end of July and beginning of August 1990, a number of Peshawar-based aid agencies operating in the Province of Paktika had their vehicles and personnel detained in a series of incidents inside or on the border of Paktika. All personnel were eventually released but vehicles and equipment were retained. Reasons given for the detentions were varied.

Concern over these incidents led to an emergency meeting on August 6, attended by some 34 representatives of NGOs and UN agencies plus 3 representatives of ACBAR. The decision at the meeting was to set up a taskforce to investigate the incidents, the power structure within Paktika and the activities of agencies in the province. The taskforce was asked to present findings and recommendations to a second meeting on August 20.

The taskforce consisted of 5 individuals: 2 representing NGOs, 1 from UNOCA, 1 independent, and 1 from ACBAR.

In the fortnight between the two meetings, the taskforce interviewed representatives of 22 NGO and UN agencies plus representatives of a trucking company used by the UN. A group of truckdrivers was also interviewed, as were individual Afghans living within Paktika and either working on agency programmes or relating directly to significant Commanders.

Information was gathered from the agencies on their current operations in Paktika, their knowledge of tribes in the area, their method of consulting shuras and/or commanders, their routes into Paktika and their security arrangements. All those interviewed also gave details of any recent security incidents and were asked to comment on the current situation.

The taskforce would like to stress that this report is formulated from the information provided by agencies during the fortnight of its existence. It is the outcome of factual investigation into current agency activities and, equally important, into the perceptions of people inside Paktika relating to those activities.

The report presents the findings and conclusions of the taskforce. It urges serious consideration of highlighted issues relating to agency activities and puts forward recommendations for action.
The taskforce urges all NGO and UN agencies working inside Paktika, and all donors funding their programmes, to act promptly on its recommendations. Resentment and frustration are running high in Paktika and the potential for violence is considerable. A rapid response is needed if potentially more serious security incidents are to be avoided and if assistance is to be administered effectively.

The mechanisms for remedial action exist. The will of the agencies to work together will be the deciding factor.

Paktika Emergency Taskforce
August 1990
SECTION 2: SOCIAL & POWER STRUCTURE

A. Tribal

Paktika Province is a complex tribal society dominated by the Pushtun Gilzai tribes. In the east of the Province along the Durrand Line the Wazir Tribe, dominant in the adjacent Pakistan tribal belt, maintain a fluctuating presence and influence in the face of a traditional, but largely controlled, antagonistic relationship with the Pushtun Kharoti and Kabulkhel Wazir tribes. While outsiders see the Durrand Line as the de facto border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, few, if any, tribes on either side of the line acknowledge its existence except when it suits their purposes to do so. Major tribes and their approximate areas of influence have been plotted on a map by the taskforce and, after production will be made available through UNIDATA Mapping Service, however, due to the large number of sub-tribes in the Province, only those which appear to have wide influence independent of the parent tribe with some relevance to assistance operations have been identified.

As a general rule, individual loyalties are heavily weighted towards the tribe and are probably only subordinate to close family ties. To some extent this rule has been shelved over the past decade in the face of a common enemy and priority of allegiance has been given to the jihad, however, Paktika was liberated by the mujahideen in late 1988 and, with the emphasis increasingly on local rehabilitation, tribal influence is re-establishing its priority over party authority.

This does not necessarily infer that commanders will lose their positions of power or their influence. Many, particularly those who gained respect for their successes in the war, have established positions of influence within tribal institutions. Of course many commanders were tribal leaders before hostilities began and will remain so.

It is essential that agencies have a good knowledge of the tribes and their key personalities in their respective areas of operation. Tribal rivalries can be fierce and agencies can easily cause major disturbances by inadvertently (or knowingly) favouring one tribe with the bulk of assistance at the expense of another tribe in the area. It is inevitable that some tribes will be in more need of assistance than others, but this fact may not be apparent (or may be deliberately ignored) and the agency may come under suspicion of favouritism, particularly where local staff are members of the favoured tribes.
It is remarkable, and reprehensible, that very few agencies working in Paktika appear to have more than a cursory knowledge of the tribal situation in their project areas. Ten of the agencies interviewed could not name a single tribe from their project areas.

B. Commanders

The term "commander" can mean many things and can relate to a powerful mujahideen leader with many hundreds of fighters on call or, equally, to a minor section leader with only a handful of men, sometimes as few as three or four, under his control. Paktika has its share of both extremes and many in between. Some of the most powerful commanders are also members of key shuras in the Province. A commander's power depends on a number of factors:

a) His party affiliation and the influence of that party in Paktika.

b) Tribe.

c) Access to funds, ammunition and weapons.

d) Number of men (partly dependent on above factors).

e) Ability to attract aid to his area.

f) His position on, or influence with, a key shura

Points c) and e) above are of particular relevance to agencies. There has been a marked decrease in outside funding to less successful and non-operational commanders recently - if these commanders wish to keep their men and their power they need to find other means of funding - two obvious sources are banditry (aid vehicles and commodities being particularly vulnerable and lucrative targets) and establishing fraudulent "aid" projects funded by NGO's from which all or part of the budget goes to cover the commander's expenses.

In Paktika a commander can establish himself as a power in a community by attracting the assistance of agencies to the area. This can be a very positive situation where the commander is honest and the community has a need for aid. However, increasingly, a perception is gaining popularity that agencies can be "encouraged" to begin work in a given area by hi-jacking their vehicles and diverting their commodities, and it must be said that this is supported by at least one NGO's report to the
Task Force, where their first contact with one commander was when he stole a wheat shipment and distributed it among his community. The ongoing relationship resulting from the incident has lasted two years and is said by the agency to be fruitful - however, it is a dangerous precedent.

Agencies in Paktika are inadvertently assisting the decline of lesser commanders by ignoring them in favour of the more powerful figures. It is difficult to see how this can be avoided given the need for good security guarantees, it is, though, something of a roundabout - since many of these neglected commanders may well turn to banditry thus increasing the need for security. There is already strong evidence in Gomal and Katawaz that overlooked commanders are moving into the field of highway robbery and specifically targeting aid agencies.

It had been hoped to include in this report a cross-referenced list of Paktika Commanders used as contacts by UN and NGO’s - however, the list is so long that this proved to be an impractical undertaking - the Task Force found it remarkable that agencies with common project areas often had no common Commander contacts. Some agencies appear content to entrust the security of their staff, vehicles and equipment to commanders about whom they have virtually no information, in some cases agencies did not know to which party their contact was affiliated.

It should be noted that although some parties in Paktika have strong representation (HIK and SYF, for instance) this appears to be of lesser importance than in other provinces. Tribal influences are so strong that even a very powerful commander would be likely to meet a confederation of lesser commanders if he made an armed move for increased influence - the tribal ethic encourages the division and limitation of power and a constant fluctuation of alliances between individuals and political sub-groups. Even were one party to establish itself as dominant the wide range of tribal and sub-tribal groups within each party group would tend to limit the impact and significance of such a position. Equally, comparatively small groups can have impacts on society out of all proportion with their apparent membership due to their ability to call on tribal support - the Yah Khan/HIG affair is a good example of this.
C. Shuras

a. Agency relationships with Shuras

From the information provided by 21 agencies, it is evident that the majority work directly with shuras:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working through shuras</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working through commanders</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both shuras and commanders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many will go to a shura after initial contact has been made with the relevant commander.

Many of those who operate purely through shuras do so to avoid possible inter-commander jealousy, while most of those who operate entirely through commanders appear to do so for the strength of support and security offered by those individuals in their respective areas.

The majority of agencies emphasise good cooperation with shuras and the ease of agency-shura relations.

b. Individual Shuras

Terms such as village shura, district shura and provincial shura are used somewhat indiscriminately by the agencies, causing some confusion in the overall picture of shuras in Paktika.

The taskforce identified five main shuras relating directly to agencies working in Paktika: Urgun, Sarobi, Gomal, Katawaz and Sharan. There are, of course, many others - whether permanent or temporary - with whom agencies may occasionally be in contact for specific tasks.

Agencies should be aware of possible confusion between a main shura and sub-shuras. More than one agency believes its list of shura members represents the main Urgun shura, for example, when it actually represents the security section of the main Urgun shura. Some names are common to both but not all.

Additional confusion is caused by the fact that different agencies - and different people within agencies - have their own particular contacts and may present them as having undue influence. This report originally intended to present lists of
members of the five shuras mentioned. However, there are so many discrepancies between the lists provided by different agencies, that such lists would only lead to more confusion.

i. Urgun

Urgun appears to be the centre for 3 shuras: a provincial shura (apparently consisting of 20 district representatives), a district shura and a security shura. Information about the provincial shura is not, however, conclusive.

The Urgun district shura is the main shura consulted by agencies working in Paktika; 12 of the 21 agencies who provided information on their shura contacts were in touch with the Urgun shura. It most influential member is Commander Mowlawi Arsala, a favourite amongst the agencies for his cooperation and far-reaching influence.

ii. Sarobi

Sarobi shura is relatively new and is now requesting that it be consulted in addition to Urgun. Given the number of agencies talking to the nearby Urgun shura, it is not surprising that they should resent not being consulted.

iii. Gomal

Gomal is reported to cooperate closely with Urgun. This may be because it is a shura with less influence but there is no other logical argument to substantiate any special relationship between the two shuras. A more convincing basis for this "cooperation" may well be that the Gomal shura send representatives to meet agencies in Urgun rather than waiting to be consulted in Gomal.

iv. Katawaz

Katawaz (or Khair Kot as it is sometimes known) is recognised as a highly organised shura. It appears that each sub-district of Katawaz has a sub-shura of 16 members, with 4 from each attending the weekly district shura.

v. Sharan

Sharan traditionally had two shuras which have now combined to form one. The background to this illustrates the influence - whether deliberate or not - that agencies may have over shuras, and is detailed in point c.5 below. Sharan is reported as being a relatively tough negotiator in its relations with agencies.
c. **Points for consideration**

These have arisen from the interviews with agencies; some merely summarise points mentioned elsewhere, whilst others are explained in more detail.

i. **Number of agencies relating to one shura**

12 agencies have direct relations with Urgun shura. There appears to be little awareness of the manner in which the different agencies relate to the same shura. The shura cannot be unaware of this - and of the resulting absence of coordination - and this may serve to add to any existing dissatisfaction with agencies. It also makes it easier for agencies to be manipulated and "played off" against each other, should the shura wish to do so.

ii. **Sarobi shura**

Agencies should take note of Sarobi's request to be consulted by those agencies working with Urgun shura.

iii. **Payments to shuras**

One agency pays monthly expenses of Rs8,000 to Urgun shura on the understanding that this is to cover expenses relating to meetings, food, security, etc. The shura is responsible for accounting for all expenses by the provision of receipts.

Agencies should consider the possible impact on the work of other agencies (and their acceptance within the Afghan community) when one agency is seen to be providing monthly payments while others are not.

There is known to be some dissatisfaction within certain communities on this account, for two main reasons. Firstly, the practice of making payments for the work of shuras is contrary to the shura tradition. Secondly, it breeds discontent within those communities where shuras are not offered expenses - a discontent that is directed both towards those shuras receiving expenses and towards those agencies not paying expenses.

In the final analysis, should every agency presently working with the Urgun shura feel pressured to pay similar expenses the shura would receive Rs96000 per month - it is felt that this highlights the true nature of the problem - no matter what the intent of such payments the realities are clear:
a) They are perceived by the community and other organisations as payments.

b) Such payments are manipulative in so far as the shura will be, at least, tempted to favour the agency paying "expenses" over one that does not.

c) Such an arrangement sets a precedent that the aid community cannot afford to uphold on a country-wide basis.

iv. Changing attitude of shuras towards agencies

This point is raised in more detail in part C. of the following section on agency activities. Briefly, it refers to the growing disillusionment of shuras in the face of numerous surveys and little concrete action. Additional surveys in the future may not be well received unless results are seen in the meantime.

v. Influence of agencies on shuras

Agencies should be aware of the influence they can have on shuras, and accept the responsibility of their role.

Where there is a lack of awareness of a community’s socio-economic-political status, agencies have great potential for harming or distorting the existing balance of power. It is not the role of agencies to play local politics.

The case of the Sharan shura illustrates the influence for good that any agency may exert.

Sharan had two shuras, led respectively by Mohd Fatih and Mohd Ali. When a UN mission visited Sharan, they met only with Ali’s shura. The anger in the Fatih camp led to a meeting between the two shuras and an eventual agreement to combine into one shura in order to ensure that all relevant parties be consulted in future.

In this case, the result was positive for both shuras and agencies. It should be noted, however, that an initial lack of consideration of the local power structure could have had the negative result of creating greater division between the two shuras.

vi. Commander shura

One agency referred to a new commander shura through which agencies should work in future, apparently created because the A16 want all aid to be coordinated through commanders.
This same agency is proposing to start operating in the Urgun area, doing a wide range of rehabilitation work.

While there still exists considerable confusion among Afghans as to what constitutes a widely acceptable representative body, agencies should be cautious about attempts to direct assistance through politically-orientated groups where there is no local consensus supporting such a development. Extreme caution should be shown especially when such groups appear to be influenced by non-Afghan motivators.
SECTION 3. AGENCIES - ACTIVITIES

This section presents details of those agencies operating in Paktika, based on information provided by the agencies during interviews with the taskforce.

Part A summarises the nature and extent of work currently being undertaken by agencies, plus areas of operation.

Part B outlines the methods of consultation and negotiation used by agencies, including security arrangements.

Part C sets out areas of concern in relation to the activities of agencies in Paktika.

A. AGENCY ACTIVITIES

There is a heavy concentration of agency work in the Urgun district, with some 12 agencies currently running projects there. Of these, 2 are doing mine eradication work and 3 are doing karez repair work (with another agency proposing karez work as a future priority). Health work is undertaken by 3 agencies, with another agency proposing to start in the near future. However, the 3 agencies concerned specialise in different areas of health work, i.e. immunisation, clinics and training of basic health workers.

Other agencies are involved in road construction, commodity storage and educational work.

Other districts have a much lower concentration of agency work. The three other districts where there is most agency activity after Urgun are Sarobi, Katawaz and Gomal:

- Sarobi - 4 agencies (health x 2, karez, commodity storage)
- Katawaz - 3 agencies (health x 2, karez)
- Gomal - 3 agencies (health, karez x 2)

The above figures, and the table below, do not include the province-wide vaccination programme of Avicen nor the locally-run schools established by the Swedish Committee, Muslim Aid and UNO.

There is no agency presence in seven districts of Paktika, including the district of Barmal which borders with Pakistan. This is significant when seen in the context of security incidents; resentment at agencies passing through such areas to give assistance in other areas is often quoted as a reason for stopping agency vehicles and personnel.
Although WFP have delivered 200MT of wheat to Zargun Shah in Katawaz to be stored for future use by returning refugees and for food for work projects, only one agency appears to be carrying out agricultural work in Paktika.

**AGENCY ACTIVITY BY DISTRICT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urgun</td>
<td>ATC</td>
<td>Mine eradication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DACAAR</td>
<td>Road construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESRA</td>
<td>Commodity storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom Medicine</td>
<td>Health clinics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MCPA</td>
<td>Mines survey &amp; monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAFA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>Veterinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarobi</td>
<td>ESRA</td>
<td>Commodity storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISRA</td>
<td>Health clinics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAFA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katawaz</td>
<td>Freedom Medicine</td>
<td>Health clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health/health clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomal</td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAFA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janikhel</td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazah Khwah</td>
<td>MSH</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarhawza</td>
<td>ESRA</td>
<td>Commodity storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motakhan</td>
<td>GAF</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Karez/agricultural/health/vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharan</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Karez/agricultural/health/vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Karez repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owmnah</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Karez/agricultural/health/vaccination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Methods of Consultation

Part of the interview conducted with each agency operating in Paktika related to i) their methods of negotiation and consultation for establishing and running programmes and ii) any special security arrangements for travel.

i) Negotiation/consultation

The following methods are used by different agencies, with c. as the most common:

a. Agency sets up shura consisting of individuals involved in programme/benefitting from programme
b. Agency contacts existing shura
c. Agency approaches Commander and then existing shura
d. Agency works directly and exclusively through Commanders

The majority of agencies have direct contact with Commanders and many then link into the appropriate shura related to the Commander. Building good relations with Commanders is considered essential.

Due to the widely differing opinions held by agencies relating to the influence and effectiveness of individual commanders and the huge number of commanders involved it was felt that a cross-referenced list would lead to confusion and the possibility of mis-representation. For these reasons the taskforce decided against the inclusion of such information in this report while recommending that agencies may wish to cooperate in compiling such data for common use in the future.

ii) Security arrangements

Out of 18 of the agencies interviewed:
7 make no specific security arrangements
5 use shura escorts from border
4 contact Commanders to obtain assurance of safe passage
1 uses own security forces
1 uses party vehicles; where not available, contacts Commander first.

No particular problems had been experienced prior to the recent incidents. It was evident that the role of shuras and Commanders
(or a combination of both) in ensuring safe passage was considered by most agencies to be vital.

C. Areas of Concern

Several points arose from the interviews which merit serious consideration by agencies:

i Raising of expectations in preliminary discussions
ii Surveys
iii Overlap of activities
iv Geographical concentration of activities
v Setting up of shuras by agencies
vi Payment of expenses to shuras

i Raising of expectations in preliminary discussions

It was evident from the interviews that considerable dissatisfaction has been caused within shuras by the tone of preliminary discussions conducted by agencies. In many cases, it appears that shuras believed that the proposals would materialise within a short period of time. There needs to be repeated emphasis in such discussions that they are only preliminary and that nothing can be promised nor should be expected at that stage.

Several workers inside Paktika stressed that such raising of expectations has made their work more difficult as the local community blames them for the non-materialisation of assistance.

Although this report avoids identifying individual agencies or personnel, it must be noted that, repeatedly, the name of Michael Barry has been raised by Afghans and by representatives of NGOs and UN agencies. His action in making unrealistic promises has caused considerable resentment and as such was highly irresponsible.

One agency who submitted information to the taskforce gave a classic example of how an almost total absence of local knowledge, impatience to establish a programme and a willingness to make commitments not supported by funding can sow the seeds for future problems. The director of the agency travelled to Katawaz under the protection of a Peshawar-based commander, he then made contact with a HIA commander "who is leader of the commanders in Katawaz" (it is difficult to believe that such a claim could be made for any commander in any area, but the commander in question appears, in any event, from other taskforce information available, to be a comparatively minor personality in
Katawaz). The director then, during a period of seven days, made agreements to establish a health service in Katawaz starting with six clinics and a 50-70 bed hospital. The agency is now awaiting unconfirmed funding approval from Europe and will also make a funding proposal to WHO "in the next two weeks". If this funding is not approved other agencies will suffer the consequences since the organisation in question has no other activities in the Province, the ultimate losers will be the people of Paktika who will be further convinced of the mendacity of the assistance programme. It must be stressed that few people in Afghanistan differentiate between individual agencies, all are grouped under the collective title "foreign committees" and, understandably given the Soviet experience, treated with initial and lingering suspicion.

ii Surveys

Related to the above point is the resentment caused by the number of surveys which have been carried out with no visible results. There is a tendency for local people to believe that if an agency is doing a survey, they must already have the funds to implement the work. The concept of carrying out surveys before securing funds is alien to them and so gives rise to resentment when results do not materialise.

Almost every agency working with shuras stressed the need for action rather than surveys. Shuras have no confidence in the value of surveys that are not a pre-cursor to implementation. As patience runs out, new surveys will meet with increasing resistance. UN missions tend to be seen in the same light, especially when missions appear impressive. A large number of important personnel with an imposing array of well-equipped vehicles initially give rise to a commensurate level of expectation; when no tangible assistance is then forthcoming, frustration is inevitable.

iii Overlap of activities

The map and list of agency activities by district in Appendix 3 illustrates the limited scope of activity in Paktika. The case of karez repair is the most obvious. There are several agencies working on karez repair and there appears to be little awareness amongst those agencies of the work of the others. There have been cases of agencies deciding to start up a karez programme in one area only to find that they are working close to another agency. It is not difficult to imagine a scenario where villages are receiving payments from different agencies to repair the same karez.
There appear to be very few supporting activities which would normally accompany and complement such a large karez rehabilitation effort;

i.e. Rehabilitation of surface canal systems
Agricultural rehabilitation and extension work
Domestic water supply provisions

The taskforce see a serious area for concern in the paradox presented by agencies who, while claiming to have surveyed and/or repaired what can only be termed an impressive number of karezes, appear to have only a superficial knowledge of their project areas. It is difficult to understand why or how such activities have been conducted without an attendant geographical knowledge which is not evident from the almost total lack of local maps produced and the inability of agency representatives to identify, even approximately, their project sites on a large scale map.

Much of the information given on karez repair projects appears to be somewhat misleading vis-a-vis the extent of work completed. Seemingly small inaccuracies or misrepresentations by individual agencies could eventually build up a completely false picture of work achieved in Paktika. This benefits no-one and is detrimental to the whole aid effort and the people of Paktika.

iv Geographical concentration of activities

Just as there is an overlap of certain activities in Paktika, there is also a marked geographical concentration of activity, focussing on Urgun district.

Such a concentration can easily lead to resentment in areas not receiving assistance and, as mentioned in A. above, the absence of activity in the border district of Barmal should merit particular attention. Many agencies crossing border areas into other districts have been accused of passing through without stopping to give assistance. There may be valid reasons for why agencies are not operating in such areas but the local objections remain.

It would appear that agencies tend to operate where there is greatest ease and security. Agencies are encouraged to focus their attention where it is known that a shura is cooperative, strong and active, with influential Commanders, rather than in areas with less obvious initial potential. Urgun is a good illustration of this. Headed by the cooperative and influential Mowlawi Arsala, it has long been the most attractive option for agencies.
v Setting up of shuras by agencies

The establishment of shuras composed almost entirely of individuals benefitting from a specific project, as opposed to operating through shuras which already exist, may be seen by other Afghans as contrary to their traditions. It may also lead to confusion where more than one shura is seen to exist and to opposition where a traditionally-established shura is not consulted by agencies concerning work in its area of influence.

vi Payment of expenses to shuras

This point is discussed in detail in point iii of Section 2d. There are two main objections to the payment of expenses to shuras. Firstly, it contradicts and interferes with tribal tradition. Secondly, it raises expectations among other shuras and subsequent resentment if other agencies do not make such payments.

viii Agencies who transit Paktika

Since one of the key issues affecting community confidence in the assistance programme relates to commodities by-passing given areas, it follows that agencies who use Paktika as a transit route to other provinces of the country can impact operations within the Province. It is difficult to envisage any effective way of avoiding this problem, however, those agencies involved should be aware that their vehicles, commodities and even personnel may be subject to seizure until the situation is stabilised.
SECTION 4. RECENT SECURITY INCIDENTS

A. ANGUR ADA INCIDENTS JULY/AUGUST 1990

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

It was security incidents at checkpoints near Angur Ada and other areas of Paktika during June and July that prompted the joint UN/NGO emergency meeting in Peshawar on 6th August. Since the Angur Ada situation is illustrative of how tribal and political forces can impact the activities of agencies over a wide area, without any apparent connection to those activities, it is worthwhile examining the situation in some detail.

Local Background

Angur Ada bazaar is situated on the Durand Line between the South Waziristan Tribal Agency and the almaqadari of Barmal in Paktika Province. The bazaar is a key trading post controlled by the Wazir tribe whose influence extends into Afghanistan. When hostilities began in Paktika in the late 1970’s it became essential to secure the key logistic route from Azam Warzak through Angura Ada and on to Sarobi, equally the Wazirs were anxious to safeguard their trade and benefit from the increased traffic. To facilitate this arrangement a tribal shura was held between the Wazirs and the Kharoti tribe of Afghanistan, traditional adversaries, and an agreement was reached to their mutual benefit.

The Wazirs would control the bazaar without interference from the Kharoti and in return would guarantee the safe passage of goods and personnel as far as Sarobi in Afghanistan. As surety to this agreement the Kharoti paid 25 lac rupees and it was agreed that any breach of the pact by either tribe would be punishable by a fine.

Background to Incidents

Some time in mid-July Hesb-i-Islami (Hekmatyr) issued an instruction to its commanders in Afghanistan to stop and confiscate vehicles and commodities belonging to the Afghan Interim Government and Relief Agencies who did not have in their possession a pass issued by the party. It is unclear why the instruction was issued, although general opinion favours four possible explanations:

a) The move was related to an attempt to discredit the widely publicised repatriation initiative.
b) The order was timed to coincide with Mojadid's (AIG Prime 
Minister) trip to Afghanistan.
c) It was an attempt to increase HIA influence and power in 
selected areas.
d) The instruction to stop agency vehicles was a reaction to the 
slow progress of assistance programmes.

However, the cause is of less relevance to agencies than the 
effects.

The HIG Commander in the Angur Ada area given the responsibility 
of implementing the party instruction was Yah Moh'd Khan, a 
Wazir, with a base in Sarobi. (Cmdr Yah Khan would normally 
report to Cmdr Akhtar Moh'd of Sarobi but he is temporarily based 
in Gardez on combat duties). Yah Khan does not have a large group 
of mujahideen under direct control and was forced to turn to his 
tribe, the Wazir, for support. In return for their services Yah 
Khan promised this group a share (or possibly all) of the 
confiscated vehicles. It is unclear how large this Wazir group 
was and how widely their activities were supported within the 
tribe. It was, however, large enough to be effective - between 
24th July and 8th August more than twenty AIG and Agency vehicles 
were confiscated between Angura Ada and Rabat.

Subsequent Developments

By 6th August the situation had become critical, UN and NGO 
movements into Paktika had virtually ceased and Mujahideen 
Commanders with affiliation to the AIG obviously had to take some 
action to secure passage of their vehicles into the Province. The 
developments from that stage should be of interest to any agency 
working, or planning to work, in Paktika (and also other 
predominantly tribal areas of Afghanistan). UN and NGO officials 
interviewed by the Task Force, with very few exceptions, assumed 
that the situation would be resolved by mujahideen action, based 
on negotiation or force, against Cmdr Yah Khan. This is a 
misleading and over-simplified perception of how such disputes 
are solved - certainly the key mujahideen commanders were 
involved in the negotiations that followed, but tribal culture 
prevails over party loyalties and it was traditional mechanisms 
rather than the threat of force that provided a solution.

Although some commanders did advocate the use of force, which 
would undoubtedly have been successful in its narrower objectives 
of opening the road and repossessing the vehicles, the majority 
felt that this was likely to lead to a tribal conflict between 
the Wazir and Kharoti and vetoed the use of force until all other 
avenues had been explored. Their reasoning was admirably logical 
- such a conflict would close the road, and possibly other access
routes to the Province, and effectively cause a far more effective blockade than that imposed by Yah Khan. Aware of the recent UNOCA reaction to incidents in Kunar, these commanders asked agencies to be patient, since an embargo on aid to Paktika would effectively leave them no choice other than an armed assault on Yah Khan with, what they saw as, the inevitable negative consequences for the Province and the assistance programme.

Negotiations were essentially on a tribal shura basis, between the Wazir and Kharoti, although commanders who were not members of either tribe were involved to various extents. The key factor being that the Wazir, by their action, had broken the terms of the inter-tribal agreement which bound them to ensure secure passage between Angar Ada and Sarobi. While these negotiations were in progress Yah Khan’s group appear to have suspended their activities and right of passage was guaranteed in the interim by the Urgun Shura and Cmdr Mowlawi Arsala (SYF) and other local commanders. The main task of the Shura was to secure future passage between Azam Warzak and Sarobi and negotiate the return of confiscated vehicles.

It seems likely from available information that Yah Khan was willing to return the vehicles but met with resistance from the group of Wazirs who had been promised that they could keep them in return for their services. At this point tribal convention provided a solution to what was otherwise likely to become a stalemate that could only be resolved by force of arms.

Since the Wazir had broken their agreement to provide security of transit, the Kharoti would re-open an old route from Rabat to Azam Warzak, by-passing the Angur Ada Bazaar, and use whatever force necessary to ensure security of passage while blockading access to the present road. (It is unlikely that this was a bluff, a similar tactic was effectively used approximately two years ago on the Paktia border with the Kurram Tribal Agency). Faced with the prospect of losing all their trade, the Wazir had little option other than to order the Yah Khan group to return the vehicles and cease any further activities on the road. The Wazir also reaffirmed their commitment to the pre-war agreement.

Present Situation

Discussions were still in progress on 13th August. The major area of discussion being how the agreement would be safeguarded in the future. Two accords relevant to Assistance Agencies are under consideration and seem likely to be agreed upon:
a) That the Wazirs will produce a written guarantee of security for agencies, breaches of which would be punishable by a fine.

b) That both the Wazirs and Kharoti would undertake to provide unarmed tribal guards for agency personnel and consignments through their respective tribal areas.

Information obtained by the Task Force on 15th August was that all confiscated vehicles have either been returned already or would be returned to representatives of the owners on request. It would appear that Yah Khan is not in a position to continue his blockade, primarily because his tribe are unwilling to risk the closure of the road and the consequent threat to their trade.

Observations

Two major points that agencies operating in Afghanistan should be aware of are well illustrated here:

1. Where a conflict of loyalties exists between tribe and political affiliation, tribal allegiance will invariably dominate. Tribal loyalty may temporarily be subjugated in the face of a common enemy, but this is a transitory phenomenon.

2. Westerners tend to perceive shuras as simple committees and are often frustrated by what appears to them to be undemocratic and time-wasting discussions. This is a misconception, shuras do not have their roots in the democratic process but in tribal processes evolved to allow them to deal with complex situations such as the Angur Ada dispute, essentially a case of mutual survival, as well as the more mundane matters of daily life. This is not to say that the shura system is good or bad, merely that it is the mechanism through which most agencies must work and it therefore makes sense that they should develop an understanding of the system.

B. SUMMARY OF OTHER INCIDENTS & CRITICAL AREAS

Although the Angur Ada incidents seem to have no direct relationship with agency activities, except for the suggestion that the initial HIG instruction to its commanders may have been partially motivated by the repatriation initiative, without exception all other incidents appear to have a more direct connect to assistance activities.
i) Khand Narai - Gomal Road

This road provides an alternative access to Paktika by taking the south west road at Azam Warzak and crossing the Durrand Line at Khand Narai, south of Angur Ada. The route then leads direct to Gomal over difficult terrain with very few populated areas en route. Some minor services have been established however, one tyre repair shop, two small travellers hotels and two chai stalls are reported to be operating.

Several reports have been received from agencies and Afghans concerning the activities of a group led by one Ayed Gul on this route. There are conflicting reports concerning his political affiliation and status as a commander - on different occasions he appears to have claimed allegiance to different parties. It appears that he was, at one time, a JIA commander who now receives neither party nor ISI funding for his activities. This disenfranchisement appears to be the motivation for his present enterprise. Originally his group had confined their activities to charging tolls for the passage of commercial vehicles, however, he has been reported recently as announcing that his group will stop agency vehicles and confiscate them and agency commodities while holding expatriates for three days before release. To date he does not appear to have carried out this threat, although he has held up agency vehicles for shorter periods, releasing them under pressure from stronger groups. Up to eight posts have been reported attributed to the Ayed Gul group on the Khand-Gomal route, although his major post is reported to be situated some 75 minutes travel from Khand Narai. He may also have connections and some level of influence in the Yayahkhel area although this is not confirmed.

What is interesting about the Ayed Gul group is the strategy used to gain the support of the local population for their activities, which could normally be seen to be counter-productive to their interests. The people of the area are apparently concerned at the low level of agency activity in their region and have been convinced by Ayed Gul that appropriating agency property will force agencies to work in the area. The very fact that they are open to such obscure logic gives some indication of their lack of confidence in the assistance programme.

ii) Gomal - Yayahkhel route

There are reports of a NIFA controlled checkpoint on this route approximately forty-five minutes from Yayahkhel. Agency vehicles have been stopped and released but threats that agency property will be confiscated because they are "all promising a lot but giving nothing" have been made.
iii) Bagzine Post - Yayakhkel area

On 30th July a large armed group based at the Bagzine post confiscated an agency vehicle and equipment and held personnel under armed guard overnight. The group was large, reported to consist of more than fifty armed men, party allegiance was unclear but appeared to centre around HIIA and NIFA. The agency personnel were told that similar actions would continue until rehabilitation activities began the region.

iv) Critical Areas

Reports of discontent with the pace of the assistance programme in Katawaz District, especially in the Yayakhkel area, continue despite some agencies' comments that the Katawaz shura is very cooperative and appears well organised. There still appears to be a high level of disillusionment in the Sharan area, this may be related to the recently combined shura - it seems to be somewhat optimistic that two shuras representing long-standing rivalries can be combined without some repercussions, at least in the short term.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, Barmal, the centre for Yah Moh' d Khan's activities, has no reported agency activity despite the fact that the majority of personnel and commodities use the route through the Aliqadari heavily. While the taskforce has no information relating to the need for assistance to the area it would seem sensible that any such aid seen as relevant should be prioritised. One project which may be appropriate, considering the heavy usage of the Angur Ada - Sarobi road and its apparently poor surface condition, would be a road improvement project, it would appear that such an initiative would benefit all concerned. However, care should be taken that any such project is not perceived as being a direct reaction to the recent hi-jackings in the area.
SECTION 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section summarises the conclusions of the previous sections and presents recommendations for action.

Immediate response to this report will doubtlessly concentrate on the recommendations but the taskforce would urge all agencies to give serious consideration to the conclusions when assessing their programmes. The conclusions relate specifically to Paktika but may be seen to be more widely applicable.

A. Conclusions

1. There is insufficient knowledge within the agencies of the area in which they are working; of the geography, the culture, the traditions, the economy and the tribal/political power structure. Better briefing and training—possibly by Afghans who are natives of Paktika—would improve this potentially damaging situation.

2. Agencies have been responsible for raising unrealistic expectations within Paktika. Promises without action have built up considerable resentment to the overall detriment of the programme.

3. There have been too many surveys which have not produced results. People are unimpressed by surveys and are demanding action. It should be understood that rural populations do not necessarily perceive surveys as a prerequisite to funding and often assume that the mere fact that an agency mounts a survey operation is a statement of intent to implement a project.

4. There is a tendency for agencies to choose locations for their programmes based primarily on logistic accessibility and political ease of operation. This appears to have led to a geographical concentration of agency activity in a few areas while other areas receive little or no assistance. This same tendency, combined with ignorance of the activities of other agencies, has also led to some level of project duplication. In the Urgun area, stated future strategy of some agencies seems likely to exacerbate this problem.

5. There is insufficient and inadequate monitoring of programmes by both agencies and donors. Self-monitoring by agencies is important but donor agencies also have a
responsibility to monitor the progress and results of those programmes which they are funding. Good monitoring should be seen as essential to continuity of activities, the establishment of an acceptable work standard and long-term planning for the Province.

6. Information sharing between agencies must be improved, with greater cooperation, speed and honesty in the sharing of reports, surveys, plans and problems.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Depending on the current situation at Angura Ada, there should be a joint NGO/UN approach made to the Wazir/Kharoti Tribal Jirgah to discuss proposals for security arrangements.

2. All surveys and UN missions to Paktika must stop immediately (except where there is already confirmed funding for follow-up work and the agency is in a position to implement the project without delay following the survey's completion).

3. A second taskforce should be appointed immediately in order to carry out a complete reassessment of agency activity in Paktika. The terms of reference for this taskforce to be as follows:

A. To collate full information on all completed and ongoing surveys and commitments made to communities, written and verbal, in Paktika, and to establish the funding and/or action status of each such survey and commitment.

B. To ascertain the status of all outstanding proposals for funding submitted by agencies to donors.

C. To gather details of short and long term agency planning for Paktika where such plans exist.

D. To formulate a realistic integrated plan for Paktika in consultation with all involved agencies covering all relevant areas of operation, giving due consideration to agency capabilities and funding expectations. The taskforce should complete its assignment within a given period, it is recommended that this be four weeks.
4. Following approval of the provisional integrated plan of action by agencies, a representative team (possibly the taskforce) should visit Paktika Province to discuss the plan. These discussions to be conducted at District Shura level and relate to the prevailing situation in each district.

5. The final Provincial Action Plan should be agreed by agencies giving due consideration to the wishes of the people of Paktika. For obvious reasons donors must be active participants at this stage.

6. Action on agreed priorities should begin as soon as possible following final ratification of the plan.

7. All agencies must be prevailed upon to work strictly within the framework of the Provincial Action Plan and subsequent funding of projects for Paktika must reflect donor's commitment to the plan.
APPENDIX 1. LIST OF COOPERATING AGENCIES

1. ATC
2. AVICEN
3. AWA CONSTRUCTION
4. DACAAR
5. DAI
6. ESRA
7. FREEDOM MEDICINE
8. GAF
9. ICRC
10. IRC
11. ISRA
12. MCPA
13. MSH
14. MUSLIM AID
15. MUSLIM ITEHAD (Afghan Trucking)
16. NCA
17. RAFA
18. SCA
19. UNDP
20. UNOCA
21. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
22. VITA
23. WHO
24. WVI
25. WFP

Information and assistance was also forthcoming from many Afghans whose knowledge of Paktika proved invaluable, interviews were also conducted with a number of commercial truck drivers.
APPENDIX 2. KEY SHURAS & BAZAARS

The map indicates only those Shuras through which most agencies presently operate and should be seen as a guide to existing areas of political influence with special relevance to the assistance programme rather than as a comprehensive guide.

Shuras exist in Afghanistan at most community levels from village group upwards, however, most do not convene on a regular basis and may only meet to deal with specific situations.

The bazaars shown are those reported to be key centres of trading in Paktika at the present time.
APPENDIX 2: SHURAS AND BAZAARS IN PAKTIKA

The attached map indicates the location and relative influence of the main shuras with which agencies have most contact, and also locates the five main bazaars of the province.

Shuras

Paktika provincial shura
Reportedly constituted of 20 members from each district. No information exists as to how often this shura meets.

Urgun security shura
Deals primarily with military, security and wider political issues.

Urgun general shura
Deals with general issues relating to its area of influence. Agencies most commonly meet with this shura.

Sarobi shura
Recently constituted and now insisting that agencies consult regarding issues relating to Sarobi area. Previously most decisions have been made at Urgun general shura.

Sharan shura

Katawaz district shura
Based at Zarghun Shah.

Gomal district shura

Bazaars

Angora Aga Key border bazaar under control of Wazirs. Has grown in size and importance during the war.

Urgun

Mushkhel

Yahyakhel A major bazaar serving the north-west of Paktika.

Zarghun Shah Reported to be expanding although badly damaged during the war.
APPENDIX 3. AGENCY ACTIVITIES

Swedish Committee Education Department, Muslim Aid and University of Nebraska all fund schools in many areas of Paktika Province. For purposes of clarity and because there is no permanent agency presence these projects are not included on the map. AVICEN also have a province-wide immunisation programme which has not been included for similar reasons.

The following agencies have some level of ongoing activity in Paktika, details of which were not available to the taskforce in time for inclusion:

DAI - Private Sector Agricultural Projects
SCA - Four Health Centres

Data shown refers to established and ongoing projects and does not include planned, unstarted or unfunded projects. Survey operations are not included with the exception of the Mine Eradication Programme where survey is an integral element of operations.

Information as supplied by involved agencies as at 13th August 1990
COMMERCIAL TRUCKING

UNILOG and WFP and some NGO's use commercial truckers to move their commodities to destinations in Paktika and for loads transiting the Province. The following information is from interviews with representative of MUSLIM ITEHAD, the company used by UNILOG, on 9.8.90 and individual drivers on 11.8.90.

1. Truckers differentiate between loads carried for agencies and general commercial loads.

2. All loads destined for Paktika are subject to tolls levied by tribal groups in Waziristan, this process appears to be quite well organised and must be accepted as a "legal" toll. Although Muslim Itehad claims to accept this as a charge against its own expenses, it is apparent (and reasonable) that they, and other hauliers, allow for such tolls when calculating their rates. The tolls are based on a "bag" charge and levied at two points on the Wana/Azam Warsak route into Afghanistan:

a) At Azam Warsak: 18 rps per 100kg or bag (info varies)

b) At Border Crossing: 12 rps per bag

Tolls for unbagged loads may vary from the reasonable to the ridiculous but general opinion among hauliers is that above is a good guide on most occasions for most loads and unreasonable demands are solved by negotiation.

3. Inside Afghanistan the situation is less organised, regarding tolls charged by commanders the following are generally accepted norms:

a) Loads moved for agencies should (and normally are) accompanied by a mujahidin escort. This should be organised by the agency, hauliers will not make these arrangements themselves. Such loads, as long as the driver/convoy leader has letters of introduction giving the following information, rarely encounter problems:

i) Headed Paper, signed with official agency stamp.

ii) Name of Commander/Shura under whose protection the load is carried and, preferably, a stamped/signed copy of agreement.

iii) Preferably letter from influential Commander(s).

iv) Load Inventory

v) Details of destination and receiving Shura/Commander etc.

b) Normal commercial loads and loads for agencies who do not make the above arrangements must be transshipped truck to truck in each area.

c) Loads transiting Paktika to other provinces may encounter problems. MUSLIM ITEHAD say they have no difficulties if agencies make proper arrangements for security, but AFGHAN ANADZAI have
encountered problems and individual drivers say there are nearly always considerable delays and often more serious difficulties.

d) ANY loads destined for Kabul or government-held areas are likely to be confiscated by mujahideen.

e) Common robbery is a major problem in Paktika, some drivers claim it is the worst province in Afghanistan in which to haul goods. Yayahkhel/Janikhel areas are cited as the highest risk, but individual drivers also claim that routes from the border via normal and onwards to Zarghun Shah and the route from Angur Aga via Rabat to Sarobi are becoming increasingly prone to hi-jacks. The normal procedure appears to be that the driver is tied up at gunpoint and his load transhipped, he is then released. However, MUSLIM ITEHAD say that tyres, jacks and money are often taken. The drivers themselves claim that robbers are becoming "wilder" and some say it is only a matter of time before a driver is killed.

f) Loss of loads by robbery is a loss to the end-user. Tyres, jacks, cash etc. is a charge against the haulier, but, obviously, increased losses of this nature will be reflected in trucking rates.

g) MUSLIM ITEHAD and individual drivers say that one of the key factors leading to the increase of robberies of agency goods is that aid agencies work predominantly through powerful commanders and ignore smaller commanders. These commanders come under pressure to increase their sphere of influence and for that they need money, they can also considerably increase their acceptability in a given community if assistance commodities can be diverted there.

Subjects suggest that agencies should try, whenever possible, to include these lesser commanders in their agreements while keeping the more influential figures as their key contacts.

Some interviewees also say that assistance seems unfairly centred in a few key areas of Paktika, such as Urgun and Sarobi, and agencies should work in other areas.

R.NcG.
11.8.90
The attached map indicates the location and extent of direct agency activity in Paktika.

**KEY**

- Activities by more than five agencies
- Activities by three to five agencies
- Activities by up to three agencies
- No agency activities