The Migration-Development Nexus: Afghanistan Case Study

Leila Jazayery*

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the relationship between migration and development in the context of Afghanistan. It begins with a brief outline of the historical and political background to the refugee crisis of the past two decades, and looks briefly at the society and economy of Afghanistan. The history and pattern of aid flows are described and analysed in the next section, followed by consideration of migration and refugee flows over the past two decades, and of remittances and diaspora activities. Repatriation and reconstruction are covered in the following two sections. The penultimate section looks at lessons to be learned for policy making in Afghanistan in the future, and is followed by concluding observations.

A cautionary note on data on Afghanistan: although the recent months have seen a surge of interest and writing on Afghanistan, there has always been a shortage of data on the country. Much writing on Afghanistan, both by journalists and a few academics during the 1980s and 1990s, relates to politics, given the Cold War context of the conflict at the time. Most other data available on Afghanistan tend to come from aid agencies involved in the country. While this provides the bulk of information and data on aid and refugee issues – as reflected in the sources used in this paper – it has little to offer on other aspects of life in Afghanistan, especially on recent history and economy.[1]

* University of Oxford, UK.

Published by Blackwell Publishers Ltd.,
108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK, and
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA.

International Migration Vol. 40 (5) SI 2/2002
ISSN 0020-7985

INTRODUCTION: OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan was formally established as a state in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to serve as a buffer between the British and Russian empires. From the mid-eighteenth century the territory later known as Afghanistan was ruled by the Pashtun Durrani, to which Afghanistan's last king, Zahir Shah, belonged. Shah reigned from 1933 to 1973, and was overthrown by a coup d'état led by his cousin and ex-premier President Mohammad Daoud. Growing opposition to Daoud's Government culminated in a coup in 1978, by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), leading to the establishment of the first Marxist regime in Afghanistan. The first wave of refugees fleeing Afghanistan began after arbitrary detentions and executions by the PDPA of non-leftist intellectuals, other figures, and members of the religious community.

Internal differences within the PDPA threatened the new Marxist regime's survival and the Soviet Union sent 80,000 soldiers into Afghanistan in December 1979 – claiming the intervention had been requested by the PDPA. The presence of the Red Army was seen by Western powers as an escalation of the cold war, to which they felt compelled to respond. Millions, and later billions, of dollars, arms, and other support was offered to resistance forces – which came to be known collectively as the Mujahideen – operating within Afghanistan and later from Pakistan. The ensuing escalation of fighting throughout the country led to large outflows of people into the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran.

After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1986, the Soviet Union began the process of extricating itself from Afghanistan. Former secret police chief Najibullah was installed as president in 1986. By February 1989 Soviet forces had left Afghanistan. Although Najibullah's Government was not expected to last without the presence of the Red Army, it remained in power until 1992. The survival of Najibullah's Government and the continued fighting led to further large flows of refugees out of Afghanistan.

In April 1992 Mujahideen forces marched into Kabul and deposed Najibullah's Government. Failure to reach agreement over the composition of a government, led to the outbreak of renewed fighting at the end of 1992. The civil war of 1992-1996 saw many tens of thousands killed and renewed outflows of refugees from areas throughout Afghanistan, composed both of repatriated and new refugees.

Meanwhile, the Taliban emerged and became nationally and internationally recognized in November 1994. Many Taliban, mostly Pashtuns from Kandahar, had at one time or another studied in Pakistani religious schools (*madrasah*). Led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, they proclaimed that the unity of Afghanistan should be re-established in the framework of *Shari'a* (Islamic law). They swiftly swept through many parts of Afghanistan, establishing themselves with virtually

no resistance from Mujahideen groups in these areas. The Taliban were welcomed in many areas because they established relative security in the areas they controlled. By the end of 1996 the Taliban had captured Kabul and other major cities such as Herat and Jalalabad. By this time the Taliban had become a fearsome force, killing, pillaging, raping, stealing, and ethnically cleansing individuals and whole populations. Large waves of forced population movements began once again, both within Afghanistan and across its borders.

At the end of 1998 the Taliban captured the mainly Uzbek- and Hazara-inhabited north-western and central provinces of Afghanistan, including Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamiyan, and Yekaulang. According to reports by Amnesty International and the United Nations (UN), tens of thousands of people were massacred, primarily, but not exclusively, the Shi'a and Hazara population of the area. A surge of refugees fleeing Mazar and Bamiyan were initiated by these ethnic killings, consisting mainly of Shi'as and Hazaras seeking refuge, especially in Iran.

Meanwhile, attempts by Mujahideen leaders to organize effective resistance to the Taliban led to the creation of the United Northern Front, which has since become known as the Northern Alliance, under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was assassinated just days before 11 September 2001. Afghanistan was, until the fall of the Taliban, a country with two governments, the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" under the Taliban, and the "Islamic State of Afghanistan", with Burhanuddin Rabbani as president. The Taliban Government was recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, while Afghanistan remained officially represented by an appointee of the Rabbani Government in the UN.

This was the situation at the start of Coalition attacks on Afghanistan on 7 October 2001, following the 11 September 2001 attacks. Since then the Taliban have been removed from power and replaced by an interim administration, headed by Hamid Karzai, due to prepare the grounds for a gradual transition to an elected permanent government in the next two to three years. This new administration and plans for the future government of Afghanistan were established under the auspices of the UN and enjoy the support of the international community. Meanwhile, many whose homes and villages were destroyed under coalition bombings have been forced to find refuge wherever they can. Their fate along with that of the already several million Afghan refugees scattered worldwide remains uncertain.

AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

Social and economic indicators

Most international sources of social and economic indicators, such as the *World Development Report* (World Development Indicators since 1997), and the

Social Indicators of Development, no longer include Afghanistan in their lists of countries because of lack of access to the population and data. The most recent figures provided by the World Bank relate to the 1970s and 1980s or project from them, as in Table 1. Total population is estimated at 17 million, with an 80:20 division between rural and urban population; 60 per cent of the labour force works in agriculture (World Bank, 1995: 4-6).

TABLE 1
AFGHANISTAN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Category	Figures
Infant mortality	162 per 1,000
Under 5 mortality	257 per 1,000
Maternal mortality	600 per 10,000
Life expectancy	45
Illiteracy	85%

Source: World Bank, 1995.

More recent figures supplied by UNHCR estimate the total population closer to 20 million, infant mortality at 200 per 1,000, and life expectancy around 44 (UNHCR, 2000). While these figures are estimates, there is little doubt that human development figures in Afghanistan have continuously deteriorated over the last two decades, and are among the worst two or three countries, if not the worst, in the world.

Economic history

Afghanistan's main source of income has been agriculture, with up to four-fifths of the population relying on farming for their livelihood. Main agricultural products are wheat, barley, fruits, nuts, and animal products. The 1960s and 1970s saw the agricultural sector supplemented by an emerging industrial sector, trade, and tourism; export of natural gas to the USSR began in 1968. But agricultural products still represented more than half of total exports. Economic growth and development were limited to urban centres. These official statistics do not tell the full story, as they exclude the very substantial trade in smuggled goods, especially in Pakistan's north-west Frontier Province. Estimates of smuggling during the 1970s range from 25 to 50 per cent of total foreign trade (Hyman, 1992: 35).

The 1980s saw some increase in industrial growth and trade. More than 70 per cent of Afghanistan's foreign trade was by then being conducted with Comecon countries (Hyman, 1992: 169). Natural gas had become the largest export commodity, with the Soviet Union virtually the sole customer (Hyman, 1992: 169). Areas under Mujahideen control and agriculture generally suffered during the 1980s because of the civil war.

The intensification of the conflict in the1990s saw the destruction of much of the industry and economic infrastructure that had developed during the previous decades. The most vibrant sector was trade in smuggled goods. By the end of Taliban rule, production and employment were at very low levels, and there was no proper banking system or functioning civil service. Agricultural productivity steeply declined due to the drought that hit most of the country in 1999. For the past decade, the main sources of income and livelihood in Afghanistan have been the war or support for political factions, drugs, the illegal trade of duty-free goods and art treasures, remittances, and international aid (Crosslines, 1998: 157).

Even though the society and economy are still primarily agricultural, the conflicts of the past two decades led to an increasing urbanization of life, as people moved to the towns and cities during the Soviet occupation, partly because most of the fighting occurred in rural areas, and partly in an attempt to survive. Subsidies provided by the Soviet Union kept the urban economy alive until 1992 (Marsden, 1998: 9). Events since 1992, however, have seen a steady decline of the urban economy too. Observers have estimated that 60 per cent of Kabul has been destroyed (USCR, 2000: 127).

AID

Before Soviet intervention

In the first half of the twentieth century Afghanistan received assistance from allies in Europe, the US, and the former USSR, in an attempt to modernize the country (Dupree, 1980: 440-481). But it was not really until the 1950s that any noticeable efforts at economic planning were made – the first Five Year Plan was introduced in 1956. Afghanistan learned to play the two superpowers against each other, encouraging rivalry in the level of trade and aid offered by the former USSR and the US. In 1953-1963 as much as 65 per cent of investment finance was contributed by foreign aid (Hyman, 1992: 31).

Afghanistan gradually turned more to the former USSR for military aid as the US became less interested in non-aligned Afghanistan in favour of Pakistan. Soviet foreign assistance between 1950-1971 in grants and loans amounted to $672 million, while American assistance stood at $285 million (Dupree, 1980: 630). More recent estimates put economic aid from USSR between 1956-1978 at $1,256 million, as well as $1,250 million in military aid (Rubin, 1999: 4). By the 1970s, the USSR and Eastern Europe had become Afghanistan's main trade and aid partners (Hyman, 1992: 30).

By the 1970s, Afghanistan's economy, still very much dominated by agriculture in both production and trade, was heavily dependent on foreign aid, financing more than 40 per cent of annual expenditure from aid and rentier income (Rubin,

1999: 4). But after the entry of Soviet forces in Afghanistan in 1979, the nature of financial involvement by the US and other Western countries changed dramatically, both in nature and size – as had that of the Soviet Union.

The 1980s and 1990s

The 1980s saw an unprecedented increase in funding allocated to Afghanistan by Western countries, especially the US. By 1986, the US, whose stated aim of aid policy was to get rid of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, openly supported Mujahideen resistance groups, allocating $600 million per annum of military and humanitarian aid for Afghanistan at its peak (Crosslines, 1998: 117-120). These funds were coordinated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the US Agency for International Aid (USAID), and distributed by Pakistan's military intelligence, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence).

The millions, and later billions, of dollars provided were either used to arm Mujahideen resistance groups or directed toward the 3 million refugees who had fled into Pakistan by the mid-1980s. While some 2 million also fled to Iran, that country chose to deal with the influx without outside aid. The aid allocated to refugees was channeled through Afghan resistance parties' headquarters in Pakistan and the Islamabad Government. The US had an active refugee resettlement programme for Afghan refugees until the mid-1980s; many now settled in the US talk of how officials went around Pakistan cities offering to register Afghan refugees for resettlement.

This huge inflow of US aid resulted in the mushrooming of international and local NGOs wanting to work with Afghan refugees in Pakistan; few ventured across the border to Afghanistan. Aid allocation was also heavily ethnically biased, targeting mainly Pashtuns. This was partly a result of ignorance by aid agencies, which were simply unaware of the composition of Afghanistan's population, and partly because of their reluctance to venture far inside the country away from the safety of the north-west Frontier Province border area with Pakistan.

The large flow of funds also resulted in corruption and abuse of aid money by those involved in its dissemination. It is estimated that, at the very most, 20-30 per cent of US aid ever reached its intended beneficiaries (Crosslines, 1998: 117-120). Furthermore, much of the abuse of aid funds was carried out by Afghan political groups using aid as a means of buying allegiance, while much of the aid sent in kind for refugees found its way into the markets of Pakistan.

Thus, while Afghanistan was allocated huge amounts of aid during the 1980s, very little reached inside Afghanistan, and made little impact on conditions inside the country. In the meantime, military aid was stockpiled in the aftermath of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and used by Mujahideen groups in their internal fighting after 1992.

Aid that found its way inside Afghanistan was granted – reluctantly – through the UN in those cities where the Government exercised control. At the time, however, some 8 million Afghans lived in rural areas, which were mainly under the control of resistance groups. Not only did very little aid find its way to the rural areas and the majority of the population of Afghanistan, what infrastructure may have existed in the provinces was destroyed as the Government and its Soviet allies attempted to root out resistance guerrillas. Agricultural production also suffered, leading to food deficit, compensated for by imports from the Soviet Union. Some international relief and primary medical care were provided in rural areas and to IDPs in Kabul, mainly by WHO and UNICEF, but these interventions were limited (Crosslines, 1998: 117-120). The main reasons for restricted UN aid inside Afghanistan in the 1980s were the unfavourable political situation and lack of funding. It would thus be fair to say that the main aim of aid to Afghanistan in the 1980s was the expulsion of the Soviet Union – and not the plight of Afghans – and that, furthermore, the main beneficiary of aid for Afghanistan in the 1980s was Pakistan.

Following the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, the UN set up a special body for Afghanistan, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA). This was intended to address refugee repatriation, food aid, transport and logistics, agriculture, health, education, industrial and communications network reconstruction, and de-mining. The US, Japan, and other Western countries pledged huge sums of money – something in the region of $600 million – while the USSR committed itself to match this. A total of nearly $1.2 billion was pledged to help Afghanistan rebuild itself and re-absorb the more than 5 million refugees waiting to return (UNOCA, 1988). The operation aimed at delivering aid and reconstructing the country was named Operation Salaam and was headed by Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan. Field offices were set up in Pakistan in anticipation of transfer inside Afghanistan. The tasks of consultation, communication, and exchanging information on NGO activities were carried out by the newly created Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) in Peshawar, which represented more than 40 NGOs working in relation to Afghanistan at the time (UNOCA, 1988).

It soon became clear, however, that once again extensive abuse of funds was taking place, particularly in Pakistan. The mushrooming of NGOs, as in the early 1980s, recurred. While funding was approved for large-scale projects submitted by NGOs and various international organizations, there was little to show for it on the ground. Most activity was restricted to areas mainly along the border with Pakistan. At the same time, the expected fall of Najibullah's Government in 1989 did not happen, and concern grew that the UN reconstruction programme may have prolonged its life. Since the main, though unstated, aim of the pledged funding was the restoration of Afghanistan into the Western sphere of influence, donors became increasingly unwilling to continue

their contributions. By 1991 funding had virtually dried up and Operation Salaam was wrapped up.

Following the eventual fall of Najibullah in 1992 the international community once again geared itself up to offer repatriation and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. Local and international NGOs began reconstruction projects alongside relief work. Much of the assistance was geared to restoration of the agricultural base. A major de-mining operation was also established. In cities, agencies worked on water supply, sanitation, health, and relief programmes (Marsden, 1998: 103). Internal fighting among the Mujahideen between 1992-1996, however, meant that most aid was needed once again for relief and rehabilitation of returning refugees and IDPs.

This period did see international aid organizations and NGOs open up to provinces away from the border areas with Pakistan, as awareness of conditions there grew and organizations such as Oxfam and WFP started to move into these areas. These included the more remote areas, such as areas of central Afghanistan inhabited by the Hazaras, as well as northern and western Afghanistan. The UN, meanwhile, restricted its assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the main centres of Mujahideen Government control, such as Kabul and Mazar (Crosslines, 1998: 117-120).

As the Taliban took over most of the country by the late 1990s, it became necessary for NGOs and the UN to renegotiate terms for intervention with the new leaders. The extent and nature of aid work allowed varied from area to area, depending on the strictness of each local commander. One of the main areas of need and assistance was Kabul, where influxes of IDPs, estimated at some 1.7 million (USCR, 2000: 160), swelled the city's already large numbers of unemployed and destitute. By the late 1990s, the city was allocated its own "relief group". In 2000, the ICRC, WFP, and CARE operated bakeries that provided bread to more than 400,000 people, while MEDAIR distributed non-food items to those qualifying to receive bread (USCR, 2000: 160). But even in the midst of the crisis, lack of international funding for assisting IDPs forced some NGOs to suspend their programmes in Kabul (USCR, 2000: 160).

By the mid-1990s, after funding for aid to Afghan refugees dwindled, UNHCR had allocated well over $1 billion to refugees in Pakistan, and some $150 million in Iran (*Refugees*, 1997: 4). WFP had allocated nearly $1.4 billion in total to Afghan refugees in Pakistan (*Refugees*, 1997: 4). There were two main reasons for the reduction of aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan in the mid-1990s. First, it was believed, wrongly for the most part, that they had become settled and self-supporting. Second, there was too much abuse of funds. There was, instead, a shift in aid policy to assist people inside Afghanistan, whose circumstances by the mid-1990s had deteriorated greatly due to the ongoing fighting. Plus, despite being unstable, the Mujahideen Government was considered pro-Western.

From then on, more of the aid received by agencies for Afghanistan was spent inside the country. By the late 1990s, the ICRC relief operation inside Afghanistan had become its biggest in the world, distributing food and non-food items nationwide and holding overall responsibility for IDPs. UNICEF has worked to provide emergency shelter for orphans and IDPs. NGO operations throughout Afghanistan continue to be coordinated by ACBAR (Crosslines, 1998: 241-242).

It would thus be fair to say that the appalling conditions of life for Afghan refugees, especially in Pakistan, has not been due to lack of funding, although there have been very serious abuses of funds allocated for refugees by all those involved in its distribution. It is equally true that the amount of aid has not been the determining factor in the movement of people from Afghanistan, since they first fled the country long before any talk of aid, and have kept coming long after any real aid was being made available to them since the mid-1990s. Refugees have continued to leave Afghanistan first and foremost because of ongoing fighting and lack of security.

REFUGEES

The number of refugees fleeing Afghanistan has ebbed and flowed during the 23 years of continuous internal conflict that have been the cause of the refugee crisis. The first waves of refugees left Afghanistan after the takeover of power by the Marxist PDPA government in 1978. The arrival of Soviet troops in 1979 sparked a massive exodus of refugees into Pakistan and Iran. By the early 1980s there were some 3 million Afghan refugees, mainly in Pakistan and Iran, soaring to a peak of more than 6 million by the time the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 (UNHCR, 2001a).

Although large-scale repatriation had been expected in 1989, the unexpected survival of the Najibullah regime into 1992 meant that the refugees did not return, and numbers probably reached their highest level – more than 6 million in 1990. Once the Mujahideen took over government in 1992, nearly 2 million refugees returned to Afghanistan; by 1997 some 4 million had returned from Pakistan and Iran (Marsden, 1999: 57). The outbreak of fighting between rival Mujahideen groups, however, deterred many refugees from returning, and created new refugees and IDPs. The next four years saw fluid movements of people as some refugees whose homes and lives were not under direct attack returned, while new refugee movements were created as the fighting moved across Afghanistan (Mardsen, 1999: 57).

The arrival of the Taliban from 1996 saw similar patterns with refugees returning if their homes and livelihoods were secure. Despite the movements in and out of Afghanistan, there were, in 1994-2000, between 3 million (officially) and 5 million

(unofficially) Afghan refugees worldwide. The combination of large-scale massacres carried out by the Taliban in Mazar, Bamiyan city, Yekaulang, and Shomali in 1998-2000, and the worst drought to hit Afghanistan for 30 years, sparked large outflows of populations from all over Afghanistan in 2000, taking the number of refugees once again to levels witnessed in the mid-1980s. Because of the restrictions imposed by both Pakistan and Iran on their respective borders, up to 1 million people have also been internally displaced since 1999.

TABLE 2
AFGHAN REFUGEES, 1980-2001

Year	Figure	Description
1980	600,000	UN calls for immediate withdrawal of foreign forces
1983	3.9 million	Civil war intensifies as Mujahideen receives arms
1987	5.1 million	Babrak Karmal replaced by Najibullah
1988	5.9 million	Geneva Accord calls for withdrawal of Soviet troops
1990	6.2 million	Peak of refugee outflow as Najibullah remains in power

Source: UNHCR, 2001.

It is now widely accepted by UNHCR itself that current official refugee figures for Afghanistan are well short of the actual number. Official figures have been based on those registered with the UNHCR in Pakistan and Iran, but there have been large influxes of refugees that remain undocumented either because of their unwillingness to be identified for fear of being repatriated, or the incapacity or unwillingness of UNHCR and host governments to offer assistance to new waves of refugees.

According to the US Committee for Refugees, at the end of 2000 there were some 3.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide and perhaps 375,000 IDPs; more have fled since October 2001 (USCR, 2001). Official UNHCR figures put the number of refugees at 3.6 million, and just more than 980,000 IDPs (UNHCR, 2001d). The UNHCR, however, conceded unofficially in 1999-2000 that there are up to 2 million refugees in Pakistan without documentation (USCR, 2001: 3). This would take the total number of refugees and internally displaced to more than 6 million. Whatever the actual figures, Afghan refugees constituted the largest refugee population in the world in 2000-2001, as they have done for much of the past two decades.

The refugees and displaced fall into four main groups. Those in Pakistan number 3.5 million. Those in Iran were estimated at 1.48 million at the end of 2000 by USCR (UNHCR, 2001d), 1.35 million by UNHCR (2001d), and 2 million by the Iranian Government. A third category of refugees includes those spread among Central Asia, India, other parts of Asia, the Gulf, Europe, and North America (see Table 3). Accurate figures for refugees in these countries are hard to find. In countries such as Russia, the Central Asian Republics, and India there is a

difference between official and actual figures, i.e., between registered and illegal entrants. There are currently no figures for Afghans in the Gulf, but given the difficulty of entering these countries, they probably lie in the thousands. A rough estimate of refugees in countries other than Pakistan and Iran, including Western countries, would probably fall just short of 1 million. The fourth group of forced migrants is composed of IDPs, whose numbers before Coalition attacks on Afghanistan in October 2001 numbered some 980,000 (USCR, 2000: 4-5).

TABLE 3
DIASPORA DISTRIBUTION (approximate estimates)

Country	Figure
United States	200,000
Europe	100,000
Central Asia and Russia	150,000-300,000
India	40,000-50,000
Australia*	20,000-30,000
Japan*	10,000-20,000
Gulf	1,000s
Others	10,000
Estimated total	80,000-1,000,000

Note: Although official figures for Afghan refugees exist in most countries, these are not representative of actual numbers. In Western countries "refugee" is interpreted narrowly as those who have been granted asylum; these constitute a minority in the case of Afghanistan, especially for recent arrivals. The actual number of asylum seekers is higher. In non-Western countries registration is easily avoided, or governments inflate figures in order to received increased international assistance. *Most data from the 1980s.

REMITTANCES AND THE DIASPORA

Remittances and transfer of funds from abroad to Afghanistan, or Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran appear not to have been significant in the 1980s. Minimal attention is given to such transfers in reports by international agencies engaged with Afghan refugees. For example, in her study on the economic conditions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan for UNRISD in 1988, Hanne Christensen only makes marginal reference to remittances in her tables on different sources of refugee income: only small numbers are shown to receive money from abroad, and by far the largest number is shown as receiving no remittances (Christensen, 1988).

Although there has been no research on the topic in the 1990s either, preliminary data and anecdotal evidence suggest an increase in occurrence, amount, and significance during that decade. Some of the reasons for this increase could be

the following. Throughout the 1980s, the UN and international community provided financial support and aid for refugees; this has gradually reduced significantly and withdrawn totally in some places. At the same time, while sections of the Afghan economy were still functioning during the 1980s, the ongoing civil war of the 1990s crippled the country.

These negative developments have increased the appeal of a family member – or sometimes whole families – migrating further afield in hopes of earning more money and perhaps starting a new life. Those who have reached Europe, US, or the Gulf states carry the burden of responsibility for relatives and other close dependents, hence, the increase in remittances during the 1990s. The flow of funds and their impact on the lives of individuals and the wider economy is impossible to estimate, as most of it is informally transferred and unrecorded.

Families have usually sent an older son abroad to Western countries or the Gulf states. There they work hard, often illegally, and are able to send money to their families in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Iran. Sometimes money is sent monthly, or alternatively in large lump sums once or twice a year. Sometimes the sums can be substantial enough for families to build or buy a new home, or start up a business, which makes the family productive and even self-sufficient; but in most cases there is just enough money for families to survive. Where possible, the extended family or very close friends and neighbours may also receive money, or at least share in each other's income. Extra expenses, such as weddings and funerals, require further large lump sums (Mousavi and Jazayery, 1998).

The number of refugees relying on remittances is probably in the low hundreds of thousands, a relatively small proportion of the total number of Afghan refugees. Though small in number, such households enjoy better quality of life than others, with remittances ranging from $200-$1,000 per month per extended family. Given the favourable exchange rate in both Iran and Pakistan, this constitutes a relatively high level of income both for the refugees and the host country. One example quoted to the writer by an Afghan refugee, whose family in Peshawar depends on remittances sent by him, puts the monthly expenditure of a community of 20,000 refugees living in one of the suburbs of Peshawar at an average of $200 per household. Similar communities exist in Islamabad, Karachi, and Quetta, as well as cities in Iran.

The diaspora

The wider Afghan diaspora, referring to those not living as refugees in Pakistan and Iran, but mainly in affluent countries, make up a relatively small section of the total number of Afghans living outside the country. Their very different composition and conditions of life in exile compared to the rest of their fellow refugees, however, makes them a significant factor in relation to hopes and plans for development in Afghanistan if and when they return.

About 5 per cent or 1 million of the population of Afghanistan lives in exile in affluent countries, including Australia, Japan, and the Gulf states, as well as Europe and the US. Of these, perhaps half have clear and permanent status in their respective host countries, mainly those who left Afghanistan during the 1980s and the early 1990s before the takeover of power by the Mujahideen. Others, who have arrived since then, especially in European countries, have been given revocable temporary and exceptional permits to stay pending developments inside Afghanistan, and have found themselves restricted to various types of refugee camps and detention centres following tightening of EU migration and asylum policy during the last decade or so, or have been left with no clear status at all, in some cases several years after arrival.

Though relatively small as opposed to overall refugee numbers, the diaspora will have very different contributions to make to the future development of Afghanistan should they return. Composed of many different sections of Afghan society, ethnic, and religious groups, they have different skills and aspirations from most of their fellow refugees in Pakistan and Iran. Many – though by no means all – of those who chose to come to the West tend to be from the professional middle class, with many years of experience behind them. Their mode and standard of life in exile tends on the whole to reflect this; many find relatively good jobs, though not necessarily in their initial profession. They have expectations for themselves and their children. They tend to give great importance and priority to the education of their children and believe in the need to adjust to life in cultures very different from their own. These very characteristics may mean they will be cautious about returning to Afghanistan.

The hesitation of the Afghan diaspora over return to Afghanistan is essentially similar to those faced by diaspora populations everywhere. First, many have made good lives for themselves and are simply not willing to risk losing the security they have gained. Second, they have commitments, such as children and mortgages which require long-term planning. Third, this group will need more than just security to return; they will require education and job prospects. Finally, those with an uncertain status in their current country of residence will not feel able to risk going to Afghanistan for fear they may not be able to return to their current place of residence should they need to.

Another group represented in the diaspora are those whose families are dependent on the remittances they send. Despite the political changes that have taken place in Afghanistan, many of these will have to remain abroad so as to continue sending remittances even after their families have returned to Afghanistan, until the economy allows them to provide for their needs inside the country.

Having set out these notes of caution, within only two months of the establishment of a new administration in Kabul, the writer knows of several

Afghan professionals who have already begun making arrangements for return. In some cases, these plans include returning to live and work inside Afghanistan. For others, this is seen as an opportunity to invest and contribute skills and information acquired while living and working abroad. Many returnees are not immediately planning to return to live in Afghanistan permanently, but intend being very much involved in the reconstruction of their country.

Since the establishment of the Interim administration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has begun a Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) programme. The programme is designed to prepare an inventory of skilled Afghans worldwide, and to recruit from among these to fill short-, medium-, and longer-term human resources needs. There is currently a pool of some 7,000 applicants, of which 20 per cent are women, covering professions ranging from agricultural expertise to banking, education, and health. The programme currently offers salaries of $400 per month and $400 installation costs; it covers transport costs and arranges orientation courses (IOM, 2002). While an excellent initiative in principle, it is unlikely that many Afghans will be tempted or even able to take up IOM offers. Apart from failing to take into consideration the financial commitments of Afghan exiles, the salary offered does not even begin to cover the highly inflated cost of living in Kabul, particularly since the arrival of foreign NGOs and UN agencies. The Interim administration has a Minister for Migration, but his remit and capabilities remain to be seen.

The Afghan diaspora was also heavily involved in political negotiations in Bonn and in the ensuing interim administration running the country at present. Some three-quarters of the participants at the Bonn talks were exiled Afghans from the US, Europe, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. They represented different interests and groups from the diaspora. Of the four parties in the negotiations, only the United Front/Northern Alliance was based in Afghanistan; the Rome group representing the ex-King, the Cyprus group representing independent Afghan exiles, and the Peshawar group, were all based outside the country. Of the 30-member cabinet selected, three-quarters were members of the Afghan diaspora, including Hamid Karzai, the head of the interim administration, who had lived and been active in Pakistan and the US at different times over the past several years.

REPATRIATION

When the demise of Najibullah failed to materialize in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the expected return of large numbers of refugees also failed to occur. The UN was forced to put its massive repatriation and rehabilitation programme on hold.

After 1992 and the eventual demise of the Najibullah regime, repatriation was once again on the UN agenda. Many refugees were willing to return from Iran and particularly from Pakistan. By the end of December 1995, an estimated 2.4 million refugees had returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan, and 1.2 million from Iran (*Refugees*, 1998: 2). Even while infighting in Kabul and other parts of the country continued intermittently, repatriation programmes continued.

It soon became apparent, however, that it was impracticable to return most refugees, and unreasonable to expect them to remain once fighting resumed in their home regions. With the fall of new cities and regions to the Taliban, many new refugees and some returnees began to pour out of Afghanistan, with large numbers going to Iran this time.

Faced with deteriorating conditions of asylum in neighbouring countries, more and more refugees headed for Western countries. With increased migration to these countries over the last decade or so, governments have tightened conditions of acceptance and used deterrence measures such as detention of new arrivals, reduction of social benefits, and narrowing the legal interpretation of refugees in attempts to curb immigration flows. There is, however, no evidence as of yet that such restrictions have had any impact on the flow of Afghan immigrants, in particular those who arrive illegally.

Afghan returnees may be categorized according to their prior living conditions as follows. Those dwelling in camps in Pakistan probably live in the worst conditions. With nothing to lose, they are most likely to want to return to Afghanistan as soon as possible. At the same time, however, they probably also have the least to return to, and will require the most assistance. Mainly rural and little educated, they probably have the least to offer in terms of skills, but they make up for this by their sheer number and their drive to rebuild their lives, farms, and property in Afghanistan. They will need both immediate and longer-term aid until they are able to sustain themselves, and until the Government is able to provide them with the services they need. According to a 2000 UNHCR survey of more than 4,000 returnee household heads, 24 per cent had no regular job, 42 per cent returned to find their homes completely ruined, 11 per cent faced problems with landmines or unexploded ordnance, 45 per cent had no access to health care, and 79 per cent of their children had no access to school (*Refugees*, 2000: 29). This category of refugees probably makes up some 50 per cent of the total number of refugees.

The second category comprises those refugees who have been self-sustaining and integrated into Iranian society. Although they have fared better economically, and benefited from schooling for their children and other services, they are marginalized as a group in Iran. They are often treated and feel like second-class citizens. Moreover, many of the benefits they enjoyed are no longer available to them. Having had to work to sustain themselves as well as having

lived mostly in cities, they will probably have more skills to offer, and are more likely than the former group to become self sufficient faster. This group probably makes up some 30 per cent of the total number of refugees. At the same time, there will be a small percentage who have married Iranians and would be more likely to want to stay in Iran.

Third, in both countries there is a small group of refugees who have, especially over the past five to six years, been living on remittances from abroad. Making up about 5 per cent of the total number of refugees at the very most, they are a small but relatively well-off section of the diaspora. Yet, although they enjoy a much better standard of living than their fellow refugees, they are regarded as out-siders and feel insecure in both Iran and Pakistan. Moreover, they could enjoy the same standard of living, if not better, inside Afghanistan as long as they have family members abroad who continue sending remittances. In addition, often coming from the better-educated middle classes, they will be keen to return to their homes and businesses and to take part in the rebuilding of their country. Many have kept up ties and have traveled regularly inside Afghanistan to maintain as much of their lives there as possible, even if they have not felt secure enough to stay. This indicates the presence of strong emotional and practical ties to Afghanistan despite the fact that they have been forced to live abroad.

The fourth group is those in the wider diaspora, described above, and who also will have mixed feelings about the desirability of return.

RECONSTRUCTION

Since Afghanistan remains a primarily agricultural country, most reconstruction programmes have focused on improving agricultural production. These have included the repair of irrigation systems, flood protection structures, wells, rural roads, bridges and culverts, and the provision of improved seed, fertilizer, and pesticides, as well as veterinary care and education programmes (Marsden, 1999). Until the end of 1992, however, most reconstruction programmes were in the provinces of Afghanistan adjacent to the Pakistan border, because of ease of access. Some limited activity began in the north and west of the country from the beginning of 1993.

One of the lessons learned by aid agencies in Afghanistan has been the initiative taken by the people themselves in implementing reconstruction as soon as security returns to an area. This was first witnessed in the aftermath of the withdrawal of Soviet forces (Marsden, 1999: 64). Refugees have divided up their families, some staying outside, while one or a few return to rebuild their homes and lives back inside Afghanistan (Marsden, 1996: 6).

Yet, much of whatever limited reconstruction took place, whether by aid agencies or by local people and returning refugees, may have been destroyed by

a combination of the drought and the bombing campaign that began in October 2001, although it is impossible to tell until full details of the destruction caused is assessed and revealed. What can be built on is the experience gained from the implementation of reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. Despite plans to move on to reconstruction and development projects countrywide, continued fighting and the need for emergency relief has meant that most has so far been used for basic relief and rehabilitation. Accounts by those who have returned to Kabul since the fall of the Taliban tell once again of the culture of self-help witnessed by observers in the past. By December 2001 Kabuls were engaged in clearing up their areas despite their ordeals of recent years and long before the interim administration in charge offered assistance.

The UN and reconstruction

In the late 1990s, the UN changed its strategy for Afghanistan. Early in 1997, UN member states from the region and major Western donors met with UN aid agencies, international and Afghan NGOs, the ICRC, Red Cross, and Red Crescent in Turkmenistan and agreed to develop a "holistic" approach to development, which would require coordination and strategic planning among aid agencies to sustain long-term projects and avoid duplication and waste. The conference led to the creation of the Afghan Support Group (ASG), consisting of 14 donor countries and the EU, which together have been the main donors for Afghanistan in recent years. Later in 1997, the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank met to develop a strategy for Afghanistan. By September of that year, a high-level interagency mission, the World Bank, and Oxfam had met and prepared a draft "Strategic Framework" document (Girardet and Walter, 1998: 241-242).

This document outlined a coordinated approach to understanding and dealing with economic, political, social, and humanitarian problems in Afghanistan, which would also be needs-driven and include a mainly Afghan workforce. Yet, while a new strategy has been conceived and much of the ground work done, the most important step of translating this new strategy into reality remains. Traditionally, UN agencies have preferred to work independently, while donor countries have pursued individual projects. The new strategy would require all parties involved to cooperate and share in an overall programme.

Whatever strategy is pursued, reconstruction in Afghanistan must cover basic areas of human life. This will mean establishing a water sanitation system, which would significantly reduce disease and prevent the high level of infant mortality, and a workable irrigation system, along with tools and seeds that will allow cultivation of land. Health and education will need to be provided nationwide, as will construction material for rebuilding houses. Most important, before most projects can be implemented, it will be necessary to carry out a massive and thorough de-mining campaign nationwide. Return and reconstruction cannot wait for de-mining to finish, but the two can perhaps be carried out in tandem.

At the time of writing, even though the Taliban fell and the new administration is in place, the UNHCR is urging refugees "not to rush home from Iran and Pakistan" (UNHCR, 2001c). Refugees, however, have started returning at the rate of several thousand every week, disregarding harsh conditions. Most come back because they have waited too long, while others have run out of money or lost their jobs in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 (Gall, 2001).

After 11 September 2001, a new administrator, Mark Malloch Brown, was named by the UN Secretary-General to take responsibility for leading the recovery in Afghanistan (UNHCR, 2001c). The UN has also set up an inter-agency emergency humanitarian assistance plan until March 2002. The new fund has financial requirements of $652 million (UNHCR, 2001c). By UNHCR's estimates there are 7.5 million Afghans inside the country in need of emergency assistance; this includes food, water, basic health, shelter, and non-food items such as blankets, clothes, cooking fuel, and protection.

In 21-22 January 2002 a pledging conference was held in Japan, aimed at securing commitments from large donors to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The total amount pledged was $4.5 billion dollars over the next five years, contingent on the new administration's success in achieving effective security. The pledges are shown in Table 4.

LESSONS FOR POLICY AND THE DEBATE ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In light of the above overview of migration patterns in and out of Afghanistan during the past two decades, it seems that the argument that aid and development may contribute to outflows of refugees by empowering them economically and socially does not apply to Afghanistan, the source of the world's largest refugee population of the past two decades. The first waves of people leaving the country in the 1970s were composed mostly of migrant workers who had no opportunities inside Afghanistan. The booming economies of Iran and the Gulf states offered an irresistible allure, as they did to migrants from elsewhere in Asia.

The following waves of refugees have been motivated first and foremost by insecurity and fighting. Aid for refugees has not acted as a magnet; refugees fled across the eastern and western borders before any aid was offered. It was the nature of human flows in the area, as well as the political motivation behind aid, that prompted the flood of money into the region. Furthermore, it soon became clear to all concerned, especially the refugees, that despite the large sums allocated, living conditions in Pakistan were dire. It also became clear that those who had taken refuge in Iran were not going to receive aid. Neither circumstance deterred the flow of refugees or resulted in voluntary repatriation throughout the 1980s. At the same time, repatriation began so soon and at such speed in the

aftermath of the fall of the Najibullah Government that international agencies were taken off guard.

Similarly, the lack of aid for refugees in the 1990s did not deter new refugees fleeing fighting under the Mujahideen regime, or later under the Taliban. Lack of security has been the main cause of migration from Afghanistan in the last two decades. Without the re-establishment of security, repatriation and re-development of the country will not take place. Development aid, however, is a necessary condition for the successful and sustainable redirection of migration flows and re-absorption of refugees.

TABLE 4
PLEDGES TO AFGHANISTAN

Country	Figures
United States	$296 million for 2002
World Bank	$500 million for 2.5 years
Asian Development Bank	$500 million for 2.5 years
Japan	Up to $500 million over 2.5 years
European Commission	800 million Euros over the next 4 years: 200 million Euros ($177 million) p.a.
Iran	$500 million over 5 years
China	$100 million for this year
Germany	$362 million over 4 years
Saudi Arabia	$220 million over 3 years
United Kingdom	$288 million over 5 years

The UN and NGOs

Humanitarian aid in Afghanistan during the past two decades has suffered three main weaknesses. First, aid during the 1980s was highly politically driven. Its aim, overtly and covertly, was the undermining and eventual destruction of the Marxist regime and its Soviet backers. Second, aid during the 1990s was delivered either under conditions of war, or without the cooperation of central government and often despite obstructions imposed by it. Third, the huge sums of money allocated to Afghanistan and its refugees provided fertile ground for large-scale abuse of funds. The result of these weaknesses has been that despite huge sums of money allocated to Afghanistan, little development has taken place. Even relief programmes have had very limited success, except perhaps since the very late 1990s.

The two decades experience of aid in Afghanistan has many lessons to offer future policy making both in Afghanistan and throughout the developing world. First, aid cannot ever have a lasting effect on development unless distributed with

the cooperation of and in close harmony with government planning agencies and projects. Second, government planning itself cannot be effectively implemented without the consultation and participation of its beneficiaries, the people. Third, as far as the UN and its development agencies and assistance are concerned, success and efficiency will be minimal as long as different agencies are funded and act independently of each other. In other words, a full harmonization of intended UN projects in Afghanistan is vital if funds are not to be wasted on bureaucracy and overlapping projects. Fourth, the massive number of NGOs, local and international, will have to be drastically cut. There has, during the past two decades, been a massive return of aid back to developed countries in the form of salaries and administration costs. Even the "Afghanisation" of NGOs has seen little sustained development on the ground. This has, in the past, in turn led to periodical reductions in funding as donors have felt disappointed.

CONCLUSION

In the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001 and during the US-led coalition attacks on Afghanistan much was made of the international community's commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the resolution of its many long-standing problems, including the repatriation of its huge refugee population. Five months later, and two months after the rapid fall of the Taliban regime and the effective destruction of Al-Qaeda activities inside Afghanistan, that commitment is under question.

While a noticeable effort has been made by aid agencies – UN and NGOs – to deliver food and other relief needs to the more accessible parts of the country, the level of financial contribution has so far been limited. While the figure of $15 billion over a period of five years was widely talked about by aid agencies just days before the Japan conference, the final pledges of less than one-fifth of that amount were made with very strict conditions attached, and only after some hard persuasion by former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata.

Large amounts of aid have rarely achieved lasting improvement in Afghanistan in the past. This is not because of an intrinsic problem with aid itself, but rather in the way it is targeted and distributed as well as in the level of commitment displayed by donors and agencies. The best strategy for reconstructing Afghanistan is one that provides relief and basic needs immediately, but also invests and plans for ongoing development with the aim of enabling the country to contribute to and participate in the world economy.

NOTE

1. A note on the timing of the writing of this case study: although much of the information available on Afghanistan and its refugees relates to the period preceding the fall of the Taliban, efforts have been made to incorporate data and information on the changing situation of Afghan refugees in the aftermath of the Coalition War on Terrorism which began on 7 October 2001.

REFERENCES

Christensen, H., and S. Wolf
1988 *Survey of the Social and Economic Conditions of Afghani Refugees in Pakistan*, UNRISD, Geneva.

Dupree, L.
1980 *Afghanistan*, third edition, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Gall, C.
2001 "As Afghans return home, need for food intensifies", Institute for Afghan Studies, www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org: 26 December.

Girardet, E., and J. Walter (Eds)
1998 *The Crosslines Essential Field Guides to Humanitarian and Conflict Zones: Afghanistan*, Crosslines Global Report and Media Action International, Geneva.

Hassan, Y.
2000 "Afghanistan faces more fighting and yet another fresh crisis", *Refugees*, 4(121), UNHCR, Geneva.

Hyman, A.
1992 *Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination: 1964-91*, third edition, Macmillan, London.

IOM
2002 Press briefing notes, January-February, IOM, Geneva.

Marsden, P.
1998 *The Taliban*, Oxford University Press and Zed Books Ltd., Oxford.
1999 "Repatriation and reconstruction: the case of Afghanistan", in R. Black and K. Koser (Eds), *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation and Reconstruction*, Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford.

Mousavi, S.A., and L. Jazayery
1998 "People who stay, migration, development and those left behind: Afghanistan", unpublished paper, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University, Oxford.

Rubin, B.
1999 "Political economy of war and peace in Afghanistan", www.afghan-politics.org.

UNHCR
1997 "Focus: Afghanistan", *Refugees*, 108, UNHCR, Geneva.
1998 "Special issue on Europe", *Refugees*, 2(113), UNHCR, Geneva.
2000 *Statistical Overview 1999*, UNHCR, Geneva.
2001a "Crisis in Afghanistan", UNHCR, Geneva.

2001b *Global Refugee Trends*, UNHCR, Geneva: May.
2001c Press briefing, UNHCR, Geneva: 10-13 December.
2001d *Statistical Overview May 2001,* UNHCR, Geneva: May (online version).
UNOCA
1988 *First Consolidated Report*, UNOCA, Geneva.
World Bank
1995 *Social Indicators of Development*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

MIGRATION ET DEVELOPPEMENT : LE CAS DE L'AFGHANISTAN

Cet article, qui a pour objet les rapports entre les migrations et le développement en Afghanistan, commence par un résumé du contexte politique et des événements responsables depuis une vingtaine d'années de l'exode de réfugiés, assorti d'une brève présentation de la société et de l'économie du pays. Puis il décrit et analyse l'histoire et les caractéristiques des flux migratoires et des mouvements de réfugiés au cours des deux dernières décennies, ainsi que les activités et envois d'argent de la diaspora afghane. Deux sections en sont consacrées au rapatriement et à la construction. Enfin, précédant la conclusion, une dernière partie s'interroge sur les enseignements qu'on devra en tirer en Afghanistan quand viendra le temps d'élaborer des politiques.

L'auteur élève incidemment une mise en garde : malgré la vague d'intérêt et de publications observées ces mois passés, on n'a jamais disposé de données suffisantes sur l'Afghanistan. Une bonne partie de ce qui s'est écrit au sujet de ce pays – et qu'on doit à la plume de journalistes ou, plus rarement, de théoriciens – dans les années 80 et 90 concerne la politique et le fond de Guerre froide sur lequel se déroulait le conflit. Quant aux autres sources d'information, ce sont en général les organismes d'aide qui se trouvent sur place. Tandis qu'elles renseignent abondamment sur les réfugiés et sur l'aide – l'article s'appuie sur elles – , il n'y a guère à en attendre pour ce qui touche aux autres aspects de l'Afghanistan, en particulier l'histoire récente et l'économie.

EL NEXO ENTRE MIGRACIÓN Y DESARROLLO: ESTUDIO DEL CASO DE AFGANISTÁN

Este trabajo se ocupa de las relaciones existentes entre migración y desarrollo en el contexto de Afganistán. Comienza con una breve descripción de los antecedentes históricos y políticos de la crisis de refugiados de los dos últimos decenios, y hace una breve descripción de la sociedad y la economía afgana. En la sección siguiente se describen y analizan la historia y forma de los flujos de ayuda, estudiándose a continuación los flujos migratorios y de refugiados de los dos últimos decenios, así como las remesas de fondos y las actividades de la diáspora. Las dos secciones siguientes se ocupan de las repatriaciones y la reconstrucción. La penúltima sección expone qué lecciones pueden desprenderse para la futura elaboración de políticas en Afganistán y por último figuran unas observaciones de conclusión.

Con respecto a los datos sobre Afganistán debe hacerse una advertencia: aunque en los últimos meses el interés y los estudios sobre Afganistán han experimentado un súbito aumento, siempre han escaseado los datos sobre el país.

Gran parte de lo que los periodistas y algunos académicos han publicado sobre Afganistán durante los años ochenta y noventa se refiere a la política, dado el contexto de guerra fría de los conflictos entonces existentes. La mayor parte de los otros datos relativos a Afganistán proceden sobre todo de los organismos de ayuda activos en el país. Aunque todas estas fuentes facilitan la mayor parte de las informaciones y datos sobre ayuda y refugiados – como se refleja en las fuentes utilizadas en este trabajo – es poco lo que pueden ofrecer sobre otros aspectos de la vida en Afganistán, en particular sobre la historia y la economía más recientes.