The Afghan Agricultural Extension System (AES): Impact of the Soviet Occupation and Prospects for the Future

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Abstract

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan left significant impacts on agriculture and other sectors. Agriculture was affected in many ways from the integrity of irrigation systems to the cultivation of opium poppies. Various aspects of the AES, as the main department within the Ministry of Agriculture (MA), were severely affected.

This study was designed to assess the impacts of the occupation and identify recommendations for its future development. A survey design was used. Sixty-two Afghans with detailed knowledge about the occupation and agriculture participated in the study. The survey covering three areas: demographic characteristics of respondents, impacts of the occupation, and prospects for the future of the Afghan AES.

The majority of participants were highly educated and lived in North America after departing Afghanistan. Many participants were assigned to passive positions or lost their jobs. The occupation affected the attitudes of the farmers, reduced the cultivation of agricultural land, destroyed the infrastructure for delivering agricultural services, altered the types of crops grown and reduced the number of people working in agriculture. Millions of landmines remain a serious threat to those who return to farming.

Recommendations are made for the Government, MA, Ministry of Higher & Vocational Education (MHVE), AES, NGOs, and International Aid Agencies.

AES rehabilitation should be given high priority to meet the emerging challenges of increasing agricultural production by adopting modern technology, generating suitable marketing channels, providing equal development and working opportunities for Afghan women, protecting natural resources, utilizing professional returnees, and replacing poppy cultivation with regular food crops.
Introduction

Afghanistan’s geographical location makes it a country of immense strategic importance in the region. Throughout its history, Afghanistan has thus been subject to continual invasion and ruled by outside powers--Greek, Mongols, Turks, Uzbeks, and other empires. Afghanistan occupies 650,000 sq/km of mountainous territory in Central Asia. Entirely land locked, Afghanistan borders on Iran in the west, Pakistan to the south and east, China to the far northeast, and the republics of former Soviet Union (USSR) to the north (Gregorian, 1969).

There are no accurate population figures available. Numerous international agencies have attempted in the past to count the population. The lack of infrastructure made access to vast parts of the country impossible and the attempt was aborted. The population of Afghanistan is ethnically and linguistically diverse. Various ethnic groups with Pashtoon as the majority exist in the country. Pashto and Dari are the two official languages spoken. There are also some other main languages and numerous other dialects spoken in various parts of the country. Islam is the single binding force and the only non-Muslims belong to a tiny Sikh and Hindu minority, plus a few Jewish families. The majority of the population profess Sunni Islam.

Economically, Afghanistan remains a pre-industrial society. The majority of the population lived in rural areas, and derived their livelihood from agriculture. A high percentage of farmers had to till the soil for landowners on a share-crop basis for only a small portion of the harvest. Major agricultural programs are land reform, public irrigation projects, improvement of input supplies and agricultural extension services. Wheat is the main crop and sheep the main livestock. Other crops and livestock are also common.

Observable expansion in education was accomplished between the 1950-1978. Primary schools became accessible to more than half of the school-age children, secondary schools were functioning in nearly all-provincial towns, and the University of Kabul offered increasingly sophisticated graduate-level programs. Despite this progress, made possible largely by assistance from many countries and organizations, large percentage (about 90%) of the population remained illiterate. Following the Soviet occupation in 1979, schools and teachers became principal targets.

Research Purpose

It should be clear from the foregoing that Afghanistan's agricultural sector was damaged severely during the Soviet occupation. Production of traditional food crops dropped dramatically, the agricultural infrastructure was torn apart, opium production skyrocketed, and potentially productive land was rendered useless by landmines. Agricultural extension had been a vital tool for agricultural development prior to the occupation. Although quite a bit is known about what happened to agricultural production during the occupation, little is known about what happened to extension during this period and what might be done to rebuild the agricultural sector in what is now a dramatically changed set of circumstances.

The purpose of this study, then, was to determine--from the perspectives of people who were directly involved in various aspects of agricultural extension in Afghanistan--what impact the occupation had on the AES and what might be done to reconstruct
extension in a way that will contribute to rebuilding the agricultural sector.

**Objective**

In an effort to understand the role of agriculture extension in the agricultural development in Afghanistan, my study was guided by the following broad research questions:

1. How was the Afghan Agricultural Extension System affected by the Soviet occupation?
2. What should be done to reconstruct the Afghan Agricultural Extension System?

**Methodology and Procedure**

Here, I described the data sources used, how participants were recruited, how data were collected and analyzed, who the respondents were, and limitations of the study.

This study relied on two primary sources of information: literature and people (former agriculture extension workers, educators, students “agriculture colleges, institutes, vocational schools”, and progressive farmers). They had direct knowledge of and experience working in agricultural extension in Afghanistan. My investigation involved an examination of documents about the Afghan agricultural sector (Agricultural Extension System) before and during the Soviet occupation and a survey of ninety agricultural professionals. They were living in the US, Canada, Europe and Pakistan in the time of the survey and formerly worked either for the Ministry of Agriculture or Agriculture College of Kabul University in Afghanistan.

Although the documents and survey provided the primary data for this study, I also had numerous conversations (Informal Discussion) with respondents that helped clarify survey responses and provide a deeper understanding of their backgrounds, experiences and perspectives on the occupation and reconstruction. Notes from these conversations became helpful in understanding survey responses.

**Developing the Survey**

The intent of the survey was to gather information about the perceived impacts of the Soviet occupation and respondents’ ideas about the reconstruction of the agricultural sector. The survey was therefore organized into three sections. The first section sought demographic and other information about the background and experience of respondents. The second section included open-ended questions about the impact of the occupation on the agriculture sector including specific questions about its impact on the Agricultural Extension System. The third section focused on the prospects for reconstruction and future development of the system. Several changes were made to clarify the questions and several complex questions were simplified. Following these refinements, the survey was ready to be pilot tested.

The purpose of pilot testing was to ensure the questions were as unambiguous as possible and that the instructions were clear. Participants were asked to complete the survey, to indicate any confusing questions or instructions, and return it to the researcher. Eight of the 10 surveys distributed in the pilot test were returned. Respondents did not suggest adding any additional questions and indicated in their comments a high level of support for the project and willingness to be interviewed by phone.
Data Collection and Analysis

The survey package, consisting of a standard information letter, the survey instrument and consent form for telephone follow-up, was sent to the sample. Forty one completed surveys were returned. Follow up contact was made with those who had not responded by the deadline and several non-respondents then submitted completed questionnaires. Sixty two completed, usable surveys had been received—including the four completed by telephone—for an overall response rate of 68.9%.

Responses to all questions were summarized. In the case of close-ended questions, simple summaries were prepared of responses frequencies and percentages. The responses to the open-ended questions were more complicated. The responses to each question were summarized and a set of categories developed into which all responses could be placed. The categories were refined and revised until they represented the full range of responses provided to each question. After all responses were categorized, the number of responses in each category was determined and tables constructed with both the number of responses and percentage of total responses for each category. Only descriptive statistics are used in reporting the results because these best capture the extent to which perceptions and recommendations were shared by respondents.

Limitations of the Study

Scholarly work on the Agricultural Extension System in Afghanistan is scarce. Afghan scholars, few in number, have written little about the agriculture sector in general and agricultural extension in particular. Foreign visitors, advisors and scholars have treated the subject briefly in their writings. Because of the Soviet occupation and the subsequent unstable political context, there is little reliable data on the effects of the occupation and what has happened since the occupation ended. This provides a rationale for conducting this study, but also limits what can be said about the impact of the occupation. There are few empirical facts that can be used to check or validate the perceptions of respondents. Other limitations of the study include the following:

1. Although attempts were made to identify a representative sample of potential respondents from among Afghans with agricultural knowledge and experience, it would be difficult to argue that the sample obtained is representative of the larger population of those involved in agriculture. Most respondents experienced some degree of “trauma” by being displaced, migrating to another culture, being removed from their positions, responsibilities, losing social and economic status, and so on. Their responses were certainly influenced by their personal circumstances and the impact the occupation had on their professional and personal lives.

2. Responses to the survey were, in most cases, the opinions and perpectives of the respondents. It is possible that some respondents used the survey to vent their frustrations about being displaced by the occupation.

3. The survey was in English and although all respondents spoke English, it was most often not their first language. So it is possible that differences in English proficiency affected interpretations of questions and limited responses.

4. All participants in the study are male. This is largely a consequence of the social, cultural, and religious traditions of Afghanistan that have limited the
educational and career options of women. Although a few women have been enrolled in agricultural colleges in Afghanistan, they have not had the opportunity to pursue careers in government or education to the same extent as men. Consequently, very few women held the kinds of positions that were the focus of this study. I did attempt to recruit the few women who I learned had held relevant positions, but was unsuccessful. So the views expressed by respondents are exclusively male.

5. The study is limited because the sample does not include farmers and extension workers who were inside Afghanistan during the survey.

6. All responses and opinions of the respondents received equal weight even though some may have been more expert or insightful than others. There was no way to determine whose participations should have been given more weight even though it might have been desirable to do so.

7. Information and responses given were all from the position of agricultural extension providers not extension service users. The perceptions of users may have been substantially different from providers.

**Characteristics of Respondents**

The majority of the population settled in neighboring Pakistan and Iran, and some of highly educated and often had lived in North America settled in the United States and Canada.

More than 70% of respondents are 40-59 years old and composed the highest educational group. More than 90% have at least one university degree. More than 60% left Afghanistan during the decade (1980-1989) of the occupation. More than 20% of the respondents were University professors and close to half of the respondents were agriculture students, extension personnel and employees of other departments within and outside the Ministry of Agriculture.

About 30% of the respondents kept their former positions after the occupation, while about 19% lost their positions and shifted to self-employment. The later includes those who were either not trusted by the system or worked in senior positions before the occupation. In addition, a little over 10% of the respondents were assigned to passive positions. They had no roles in the major decision making processes.

Just over 60% of the respondents were employed during the survey, while fewer than 40% were not employed. Among the employed group of the respondents, a small group is employed in their profession, while a large number is working outside their profession. This is because of the updating of their credential and certain rules and regulations in their dwelling areas.

**Impact of the Soviet Occupation**

The goal of the occupation was to destroy the collective memory and to make Afghans forget their social history and cultural identity. Men of the older generations, having too strong of a memory to be easily erased, were in the process of physical elimination. The attention was focused on the younger generations, especially the children.

The occupation affected self-sufficiency of agriculture and agricultural institutions. The impact of the occupation on various parts of agricultural extension
includes: programs, organizational structures, budget, teaching methods, responsibilities, and relationships with related organizations inside and outside the Ministry of Agriculture (Gul & Morrison, 1988). Findings on the impact on the attitudes of the farmers toward improved technologies in agriculture are also included.

The agricultural sector was affected the most. Agricultural Extension System as the main linkage of the government to rural communities was severely damaged (Wesa, 1994).

Agricultural production, organizations, human resources (trained personnel), improved seeds and breeds, fertilizer, irrigation systems, technology, and proper farming management and maintenance of agricultural land were severely disrupted. Most of the rural areas were not under the government control. Numerous qualified experts, particularly in agriculture, were jailed or fled the country (Majrouh & Elmi, 1988).

Due to the occupation wild plants replaced normal crops. Wild animals, birds and insects left the mountains and deserts and migrated to near-by villages. Wildlife and natural resources such as forests and soils have deteriorated.

Decisions and programs forwarded to farmers were viewed as full of Soviet content and made by foreign advisors. Messages coming from Soviet and pro-Soviet Afghan were anti-Afghani, anti-Islamic, and untrustworthy. The Soviets prohibited high quality Western technology and facilitated the dissemination of their low quality technology. The Soviets and their allies were not there to help but rather to destroy Afghans’ culture and religion. They jailed and killed conspicuous, religious, tribal, and ethnic leaders in the country.

**Prospects for the Future**

Appropriate and practical suggestions for extension program development, organizational restructuring, budgeting, training and defining responsibilities are presented. Practical relationships between the AES and related departments within and outside the Ministry of Agriculture is also suggested. It also covers responses of the respondents regarding AES encouraging changes on the role of the people, role of NGOs, relationships between agricultural extension and NGOs, role of the government and role of international assistance in agriculture and extension development in Afghanistan.

Several themes can be identified from the findings in this part. Suggestions are made by a group of professional Afghans, to expand and strengthen agricultural extension programs by gaining the trust of rural people and involving them in agricultural extension program planning. Respondents recommended revising the content of the agricultural extension program to one based on the needs of Afghanistan farmers. A proper budget and incentives for both farmers and extension workers will likely expedite the process. Proper organizational structures with decentralized policies and clear job descriptions will help the reconstruction of the Afghan AES. Respondents suggested a comprehensive scope and broad responsibilities to fulfill the needs of the farmers by transferring improved technologies under required skill and proper management. Respondents also support inviting outside experts to determine a suitable scope and responsibilities in the reconstruction process of the Afghan AES.

Strong and smooth relations between agricultural extension, research centres, academic institutions and other related departments within and outside the Ministry of
Agriculture is helpful. Relations should be based on achieving shared goals rather than promoting personnel, linguistic, regional, or other issues. Open communication may control duplication of services and create the opportunity to share various resources. Respondents believe the future government of Afghanistan must play an active role by exploring internal as well as external financial, educational and technical sources for the reconstruction of the agricultural sector. From respondents' perspectives, the future government has to be more practical and efficient, creating trust among people and reducing the vast gap between people and government through widespread opportunities to express needs, ideas and problems. Furthermore, the government must value the agricultural sector in the national economy by increasing agricultural land, building and reconstructing irrigation systems, designing policies to increase agricultural production and expanding financial organizations to offer free or low interest loans.

Respondents appreciated pre-post occupation humanitarian assistance of the NGOs to the Afghans. Respondents want external NGOs to avoid direct contact with the farmers and not to concentrate on religious and political issues, focusing on the reconstruction process instead. NGOs to campaign against narcotics and provide farmers with alternative crops, livestock and fisheries. Training of both extension workers and farmers by enrolling them in various educational programs is useful for the future development of the agricultural sector as well as the AES. Respondents want the safe return of displaced Afghans and proper use of returnees knowledge and skills in various sectors. Respondents recommended strong and close relations between NGOs and the AES. Such relations may save time and money, by setting common goals, sharing resources while training and cooperating on other development activities. Due to the close connection between the AES and the rural population, the AES may encourage further participation of NGOs by publicizing NGOs’ activities in the area.

Respondents recommended return of the farmers; sharing resources; and minimizing personal, tribal, regional and religious conflicts. Rural Afghans must organize themselves into local councils and share their local knowledge through active participation in the decision making process. Animosity, loss of trust in the government and destruction of infrastructure were the most common effects of the occupation on the attitudes of the farmers. Because of the occupation, most young farmers became war addicts, lost their interest in farming and gained more knowledge about weapons than agricultural technology. Respondents recommended that agricultural extension try to change farmers' attitudes towards improved technologies by establishing demonstration plots to show the benefits of various new agricultural techniques and by enrolling large numbers of farmers in educational programs.

The AES should change farmers' attitudes towards modern practices by encouraging women and youths to participate in agricultural programs. The AES must consider women's role in the reconstruction process. There was no central government during the occupation and in the few cases where regional governments opposed, they were not strong enough and were not in a position to control the country as a whole. From respondents' perspectives, the vast cultivation of narcotics is one of the major impacts of the occupation. Respondents suggested useful strategies for reducing narcotics cultivation. For example, people must understand the side effects of narcotics and joint efforts of various organizations (NGOs, UN, AES) involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan should be initiated. The active participation of religious,
tribal, and ethnic leaders was suggested as an effective strategy. The majority of Afghans is religious and respects the decisions of their tribal and ethnic elite. Strong government laws against narcotics and providing farmers with alternate crops and livestock should be considered and government should subsidize certain crops and provide proper financial support. Respondents further called on a world effort to reduce narcotics cultivation, since they believe, narcotics are global problem.

Afghanistan's destroyed infrastructure needs sufficient international aid. Various international organizations can take part.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, five general conclusions can be drawn.

1. Professional Leadership

   Educated people and institutions offer the greatest potential to the economic restructuring of Afghanistan. For the last 60 years, the country has invested a substantial amount of local and international aid in its economic and agricultural development. Strong professional leadership is required to guide the war-torn nation in the direction of positive redevelopment. A strong well-developed infrastructure determines the economic potential of a nation. Afghanistan, with an agricultural infrastructure largely destroyed by the years of war, may need an extended period of redevelopment to fulfill the dreams of those who foresee its reemerging as a self-sufficient nation.

2. Infrastructure Destruction

   Agricultural extension has a central role to play in rebuilding the infrastructure of Afghanistan. Proper integration of agricultural extension within the social, cultural, educational, and political context of Afghanistan can contribute to the reconstruction of the agricultural sector as well as the country. This is an important challenge for the future Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Extension of Afghanistan.

3. Agricultural Extension Centres' Occupation

   The development of a variety of agricultural extension training centres designed to assist extension staff and farmers in the nation's capital and in different provinces through the country, are required to keep them up-to-date with knowledge and skills. The destruction and occupation of the extension training centres by the military during the conflict has led to inadequate extension staff training, shortages of experienced subject matter specialists, and weak in-service training. Teaching equipment has also been appropriated by the regime of political propaganda. In order for agricultural specialists to assist in rebuilding the country's economic infrastructure, there is an immediate need to direct adequate resources to the rebuilding and staffing of agricultural extension training centres.

   In the past, ideological reasoning prevented cooperation between agricultural extension, agricultural research (Ministry of Agriculture) and agricultural education (Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education) in the capital as well as in the provinces. It is only through the development of strong professional relations between these agencies that the potential for agricultural redevelopment of Afghanistan can be realized.

4. Suspicious attitude

   There is a lack of trust of many agencies within the country. During the occupation by successive regimes, farmers grew suspicious of improved farming technologies. They blamed the government for any destruction caused during the
occupation. The occupation also resurfaced a variety of tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional conflicts that had long remained dormant.

The lack of trust of government meant that NGOs took on a new sense of importance. As the government had little access to the more remote areas of the country, NGOs provided Afghans with many basic necessities. NGOs assumed the responsibility for training technicians and professional agents in different sectors of agriculture, public health, education, and the removal of land mines. The assistance provided by NGOs has, in the past, been abused by Afghans and non-Afghans alike. This is one area requiring immediate attention, since NGOs are one of the main sources of employment for expatriate Afghan academics.

5. Women's limited access to AES

Finally, in spite of past efforts agricultural extension programs have been unable to reach all farm families within the country. Therefore, women have had little or no access to extension services. Extension workers have traditionally been male, and women's contributions to agricultural production have not been fully appreciated. In some cases, social custom and religion limit or prohibit the contact of non-family males with women. This has hampered attempts to involve women in agricultural extension programs. In order for the country to benefit from full participation in the planning and implementation of agricultural extension policy, methods must be found to involve women in agricultural extension programs.

Recommendations

The decade of the Soviet occupation and a little over a decade of civil war left Afghanistan with numerous economic, social, educational and cultural problems. The reconstruction process may not be the task of on individual, social group, or government. Various groups can participate. Based on the findings of this study following recommendations are made to various stakeholders in the reconstruction process:

**Recommendations for the Government of Afghanistan**

Historically, the governments of Afghanistan were the keys to the solutions to economic problems. The future government of Afghanistan in whatever form it takes, should emphasize utilizing local resources and attracting foreign aid and direct investment, thus generating sufficient revenue to reconstruct the country’s infrastructure over time.

1. The future government of Afghanistan should place high priority on the agricultural sector in the national economy/national and plan provide appropriate incentives to encourage Afghans-both professionals and farmers residing in exile to return home and participate in reconstruction.

2. The promotion of women's rights in the country should be seen as a central priority. Afghanistan will not reach its full potential until Afghan women are given this right to exercise and develop their full potential.

3. Considering the shortage of professional and skilled personnel, the coordinated and systematic involvement of NGOs would be of substantial value during reconstruction. Each NGO should be provided with a sectoral profile that includes a range of project activities they could support. The identification and selection of
NGOs should be done in full consultation with the government and consistent with government policies.

**Recommendations for the Ministry of Agriculture**

1. The Ministry should clarify required budget for agricultural departments to the government and should identify further internal and external alternatives to government funding. Furthermore, the Ministry should provide autonomous budget to agricultural extension.

2. Reconstruction of the Agricultural Extension System should be given top priority in any action towards the reconstruction of agricultural sector. At present, the Agricultural Extension System is in total disarray. The reconstruction of 250 agricultural extension (destroyed/damaged) units throughout the country should be given high priority.

**Recommendations for the Agricultural Extension System**

Agricultural extension restores the relation between the generation of knowledge by research institutions and the adoption of new technologies by farmers. Agricultural extension ensures the availability of means of production in order to translate knowledge into increased production, through monitoring and organizing the input delivery network. Agricultural extension should strengthen its capability to meet emerging challenges in Afghanistan.

1. The Agricultural Extension System should adopt an integrated model of agricultural development that focuses on the multiple needs of the farm family and rural youth. The system should also mobilize the timely supply of technology and credit. The services should have gross roots and close access to them.

2. Agricultural extension programs should develop objectives, policies, and procedures suited to the current conditions in the country. The Agricultural Extension System should prepare its programs in cooperation with farmers or their representatives. Such plans will not only address local concerns, but will be more acceptable to farmers. Agricultural extension should encourage community level participation in planning and decision making processes. Farmers' involvement in such processes could be a useful learning experience for both farmers and extension workers.

3. Women represent more than 50% of the Afghan population; have relatively poor access to productive resources (labor and land) or financial assets such as land title. The gender impact of extension messages often is not considered until negative consequences have occurred. Gender should be considered in the design and implementation of all extension projects. All field staff should be trained to consider the implications of technological change for women's activities within the farming system. Since women farmers have different needs and constraints, male extension staff require special training to understand how to reach them with relevant information. The recruitment of female extension agents should be encouraged.

4. To ensure the continued relevance of agriculture and extension education research to the provision of extension services, it is essential to foster closer linkages between agricultural extension and agricultural colleges, universities, training and...
research programs, and other related institutions. Coordination between extension and other development services has proven to be a major problem in the past. The effectiveness of extension is hampered when its activities are not adequately supported by other development efforts. The most urgent task is to continue to improve cooperation between extension and research to make more technologically and economically attractive research results available to the extension agency for dissemination to farmers.

**Recommendations for the Ministry of Higher Education (Agricultural Colleges)**

The Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education should cooperate with the Ministry of Agriculture in developing relevant research projects, curriculum, and programs.

1. The most urgent need at this time is to attain "normalcy", including a restored formal education system accessible to all, including women. A first step in this direction is the training of extension agents and other personnel. An information gathering system, to support an updated curriculum, is also a priority. Lack of adequate physical infrastructure constitutes another essential constraint and should be addressed at the same time. Education should be seen as an instrument contributing to the development and unity of the country.

2. Agricultural colleges and institutions within the Ministry of Higher Education should facilitate close liaisons with agricultural extension and similar services within the Ministry of Agriculture. For many years universities tended to be too theoretical and lacked sufficient financial resources for field research. In contrast, agricultural extension and allied services formerly had sufficient funds but less qualified research personnel. By joining theoretical scientists with field researchers, both will gain.

**Recommendations for Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Over time, different NGOs found their niche, some as innovators and others as implementers. Ultimately, a greater degree of explicit specialization in the NGO community emerged: some as applied research centres, others as community development consultants, and some as employment, educational, training, medical, construction, and relief providers. Furthermore, international NGOs supported the creation and development of Afghan NGOs. Afghan NGOs are largely implementers, and do not have guaranteed funds, normally working project-by-project.

1. Given the shortage of professional and technical manpower in Afghanistan, the coordinated and systematic involvement of the professional NGOs would be of considerable value in facilitating the rehabilitation process. The identification and selection of NGOs should be arranged in full consultation with the government to be consistent with its policies.

2. Afghanistan is widely regarded as the world's largest exporter of heroin, much of it entering Iran and Pakistan. Both countries need assurances that opium cultivation in Afghanistan will be drastically reduced. Reducing narcotics is a major challenge for the future government. The Agricultural Extension System and NGOs along with international assistance, should cooperate in meeting this
challenge. Eradicating illicit crop cultivation while introducing acceptable new
cropping patterns, packages of improved seed, fertilizer, technology, and other
necessary inputs should be a high priority in the reconstruction of the agricultural
sector. In addition, because of poor understanding and misconceptions about
drugs, it is important to increase the awareness of local communities and leaders
about the negative effects of narcotics.

Recommendations for International Aid Agencies
Afghanistan's natural and human resources reconstruction is beyond its financial
capacity. International assistance should be provided by various countries,
organizations, agencies, foundations, groups, and individuals. International
assistance should concentrate on the following:
1. After more than two decades of devastation in Afghanistan, cash up front will
appeal to most Afghans, especially current warlords. For maximum benefit,
financial aid should not be in the form of cash. It should rather be in the form of
various technologies, equipment, expertise, and other non-cash investments. In
addition, major financial assistance should not go to the salaries and
accommodation of international scholars. Rather, it should be directed to building
internal capacity.
2. The international community should think of long-term reconstruction projects for
Afghanistan. The reconstruction effort goes beyond initial political stabilization,
and development continues for years. Even though crucial factors to
Afghanistan's stability remain to be determined like the ability of a post-war
government to effectively rule the country, the international community should
begin addressing long-term needs now.

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