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The Earthquake in South Asia: Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Operations

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Summary

On October 8, 2005, a powerful earthquake struck northern Pakistan and India, killing at least 74,500 people and injuring over 130,000 more. The earthquake damaged the homes of as many as three million people, forcing many of them to search for alternative means of shelter. The full extent of the destruction remains unknown because government authorities and relief organizations continue to have difficulty accessing some remote locations. As of the date of this report, the United States government (USG) has pledged \$410 million toward the relief effort, almost all of it to assisting Pakistan, which remains a key U.S. ally in the war against terror. So far, about 35% of this pledge has been committed. Because of the heavy USG military and development presence in neighboring Afghanistan, the logistics of bringing resources into Pakistan has been relatively straightforward. The USG, Government of Pakistan, and NATO, among others, are operating daily relief flights to ferry supplies, personnel, and victims to and from the region.

The earthquake struck a region that lies along the southern reaches of the Himalayan Mountains. While continuing to deliver humanitarian assistance and gaining full access is critical, one of the main humanitarian priorities in the coming months is ensuring that the estimated three million people who lost their homes have adequate protection from winter weather and diseases. Relief organizations are distributing winterized tents, setting up emergency clinics, and working to vaccinate children against measles, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, and polio. The most significant health problem identified so far has been a number of cases of Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) brought on by lack of hygiene and exposure to cold weather. Cases of acute diarrhea are also emerging. The World Food Programme (WFP), which estimates that 2.3 million Pakistanis will need food aid in the next two to four months, is working to pre-position 95,000 tons of food in affected areas. A final pressing concern remains the inaccessibility of some areas due to road damage caused by the earthquake.

Although no systematic study has been conducted, anecdotal evidence suggests that the USG's aid effort has improved ordinary Pakistanis' opinions of the United States. Nevertheless, some aid agencies are saying that the country needs a great deal more aid than it is getting, and warn that the economic impact of the disaster will surpass \$5.2 billion. This burden may contribute toward long-term instability in an area perceived to be of critical importance to the United States in the war on terror. This report will be updated as events warrant.

Legislative activity so far has included the introduction of several resolutions expressing sympathy for those affected by the earthquake, pledging American support for the victims, and lauding the relief efforts of U.S. personnel.

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The Earthquake in South Asia: Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Operations

Background

Introduction

A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.6 on the Richter scale struck northern Pakistan at 8:50 am local time on October 8, 2005. Its epicenter was near the city of Muzaffarabad, 65 miles north northeast of Islamabad, Pakistan, and near the frontier with India. The earthquake was felt as far away as New Delhi, India, and Kabul, Afghanistan.¹ The vast majority of the deaths — over 74,500 at the time of this report — occurred in Pakistan, most of them in the Pakistani-controlled portions of the disputed territory of Kashmir. The fatality count in India stands at 1,309. Afghanistan registered four deaths.²

The former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, as it is called in India, or Azad (“Free”) Jammu and Kashmir, as it is known in Pakistan, has been a source of contention between India and Pakistan since the two countries gained their independence from Great Britain in 1947.³ Although the earthquake has led to a certain amount of rapprochement between New Delhi and Islamabad — including the

¹ United States Geological Survey (USGS), National Earthquake Information Center, [<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqinthenews/2005/usdya/>], accessed October 20, 2005.

² USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #29, December 8, 2005.

³ See CRS Report IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*, by Alan Kronstadt: “The problem is rooted in claims by both India and Pakistan to the former princely state, divided since 1948 by a military Line of Control (LOC) separating India’s Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan-controlled Azad [Free] Kashmir (India and Pakistan fought full-scale wars over Kashmir in 1947 and 1965). Some Kashmiris seek independence from both countries. Spurred by a perception of rigged state elections that unfairly favored pro-New Delhi candidates in 1989, an ongoing separatist war between Islamic militants and their supporters and Indian security forces in Indian-held Kashmir has claimed 40,000-90,000 lives. India blames Pakistan for fanning the rebellion, as well as supplying arms, training, and fighters. Pakistan, for its part, claims to provide only diplomatic and moral support to what it calls ‘freedom fighters’ who resist Indian rule in the Muslim-majority region.” See also CRS Issue Brief IB94041, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*, by Alan Kronstad, and Haqqani, Husain, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005. For a short summary, see BBC, “India and Pakistan: Tense Neighbors,” December 16, 2001. Available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/102201.stm]. For recent exchanges between Pakistan and India, see CRS Report RS21584, *Pakistan: Chronology of Recent Events*, by Alan Kronstadt.

opening of telephone exchanges and previously closed border crossings — its long-term political effects in the region remain to be seen. The domestic significance of the earthquake within Pakistan and India is taken up in subsequent sections of this report.

Comparisons to Past Disasters

The full extent of the damage caused by the earthquake in South Asia remains unknown. Although its toll in human lives appears, so far, to be about a third of that of the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, current reports indicate that damage to Pakistan's economy and infrastructure has been substantial. **Table 1** presents a list of the ten deadliest natural disasters of the past century, based principally on the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) maintained by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). Although CRED makes efforts to ensure the reliability of its data, it must be cautioned that obtaining precise and accurate information about natural disasters, many of which occurred decades ago and in areas where political and environmental conditions made data collection difficult, is not possible. Thus casualty figures stemming from, for instance, the series of deadly floods in China that took place a half-century ago, must all be taken as very rough approximations. Even the figures for the recent tsunami vary to some degree from source to source, and must be considered estimates. On the whole, however, the EM-DAT, because of its explicit definitions and uniform criteria for event inclusion, provides the best means of comparing data across different disasters.⁴

Table 1. Deadliest Natural Disasters Since 1900

Date	Location	Event	Estimated Fatalities
July 1931	China (Huang He River)	Flood	3.7 million
July 1959	China (Northern areas)	Flood	2 million
July 1939	China (Honan Province)	Flood	500,000
Nov. 12, 1970	Bangladesh (Khulna, Chittagong)	Cyclone	300,000
July 27, 1976	China (Tangshan, Tientsin)	Earthquake (magnitude 7.6)	242,000 ^a
Dec. 26, 2004	Indian Ocean (esp. Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand)	Tsunami and Earthquake (9.0)	224,495 ^b
May 22, 1927	China (Jiangxi Province)	Earthquake (7.9)	200,000
Dec. 16, 1920	China (Kansu Province)	Earthquake (7.8)	180,000
Sep. 1, 1923	Japan (Kanto plain)	Earthquake (7.9)	143,000
1935 ^c	China (Yangtze river)	Flood	142,000

⁴ EM-DAT is at [<http://www.em-dat.net/index.htm>]. Criteria and definitions are at [<http://www.em-dat.net/criteria.htm>].

Sources: EM-DAT (op cit) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) at [<http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/eqlists/eqsmosde.html>]. This table does not include droughts, epidemics, and famines, the most significant of which have claimed as many as twenty million victims. The events are excluded because of the difficulty in pinpointing their locations and timing, and, more importantly, the extent to which they were exacerbated — or created — by humans. It would be difficult to argue, for instance, that the recent North Korean famines, which have likely claimed several hundred thousand lives over several years, are entirely “natural” in their origin.

- a. USGS lists official death toll at 255,000; some reports indicate toll as high as 655,000.
- b. The USGS lists death toll from earthquake and tsunami at 283,106.
- c. Month unknown.

Although its nearly 75,000 fatalities rank it as a truly major calamity, the recent earthquake in South Asia was not among the ten deadliest natural disasters of the last century.⁵

Current Situation and Critical Needs

In addition to the 74,500 deaths recorded so far, over 128,288 injuries have been reported in Pakistan and 6,622 in India. The International Organization for Migration estimates that three million people lost their homes in the earthquake and now require alternative shelter.⁶ All of the figures may rise, perhaps significantly, as government authorities and humanitarian organizations continue to survey remote areas, such as the Neelum, Jahlum, Kargan, Alai, and Naran valleys, where the earthquake destroyed road links. The onset of winter is expected to make access to these areas even more difficult.⁷ **Table 2** summarizes the damage caused by the earthquake; updates are available on the Pakistan Federal Relief Commission website, cited below.

⁵ The December 2004 tsunami, however, was. The tsunami was unique in both the extent of its damage and the number of countries it affected. Unlike other disasters, which have been relatively more localized, the tsunami struck thousands of miles of populous coastline in nearly a dozen countries, affecting millions of people. Also, the deaths of thousands of tourists from the industrialized world vacationing in southern Thailand and Sri Lanka — mostly Europeans but also many Americans and Japanese — may have given the Indian Ocean tsunami a higher profile than the more recent South Asian earthquake. Indeed, there has been some concern that donors who contributed to the tsunami relief effort may be less enthusiastic about assisting victims of the second major South Asian natural disaster to strike in less than a year.

⁶ USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #27, November 29, 2005, citing the government of India and IOM.

⁷ WFP Emergency Report no. 44, October 28, 2005, available at [<http://www.wfp.org/english/?n=34>]; updates are provided regularly. For road clearance information, see government of Pakistan Summary of Relief Activity, November 5, 2005, available at [<http://www.earthquakepakistan.com/images/summary%20oct-nov.pdf>].

Table 2. Estimated Number of People Affected by the South Asia Earthquake

(Current as of December 8, 2005)

	Pakistan	India	Afghanistan	Total
<i>Killed</i>	73,338	1,309	4	74,644
<i>Injured</i>	128,308	6,622	n/a	134,910
<i>Displaced</i>	2.8 million	150,000	n/a	2.95 million

Sources: Pakistani casualty figures are from government of Pakistan Federal Relief Commission website at [http://earthquakepakistan.com/Press_Brief_latest.htm], which is updated regularly. Injury figures include 69,392 “seriously injured,” and 58,896 “other injured.” Other data reported USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet # 29, December 29, 2005, citing the government of India and IOM.

Government agencies and humanitarian organizations have identified a number of critical needs to be addressed in the weeks and months ahead. These include distributing shelter before the onset of winter to those whose homes were destroyed, caring for orphaned or abandoned children, providing medical supplies and non-food items to prevent the outbreak of disease, and making helicopters and other transport available to ferry supplies and personnel to affected areas and victims to safety.

Winter and Shelter

With an estimated three million left homeless by the earthquake in the foothills of the Himalayas, provision of emergency shelter before the onset of winter is among the most pressing priorities facing humanitarian workers. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) reports that many residents of highland areas have preferred to stay on their land through the winter rather than descend to emergency camps in the valleys. In response, the Pakistani military and the humanitarian community are seeking to rebuild, at least temporarily, as many shelters as possible in these areas.⁸ According to the Pakistani Meteorological Department, the upcoming winter is expected to be particularly fierce: “Snowfall is expected to exceed considerably above [*sic*] the normal range both in terms of frequency of occurrence and amount. As such, the temperatures are likely to range well below normal.”⁹ UNHCR and its partners have set up twenty organized tent camps to shelter earthquake survivors. An additional 500 camps of various sizes have sprung up spontaneously, however, and one of UNHCR’s pressing concerns is to get supplies to these camps.¹⁰ The government of Pakistan and relief

⁸ For updated information, please refer to OCHA’s situation reports, available at [<http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?MenuID=9839&Page=1385>].

⁹ Chaudhry, Qamar-uz-Zaman, Director General, Meteorological Service of Pakistan, “Seasonal Weather Outlook, Pakistan-Earthquake Affected Areas,” press release, October 28, 2005. Available at [<http://www.pakmet.com.pk/outlook.htm>].

¹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, December 1, 2005 (transcript # 8410).

agencies estimate that 500,000 winterized tents are necessary to house victims of the earthquake. As of November 30, IOM had verified that over 60% of this goal had been met.¹¹ Despite the progress, there has been some concern that tents will be inappropriate for many highland inhabitants.¹²

Children

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 17,000 Pakistani children died when their schools collapsed in the earthquake. The trauma for those who survived is worse, in the estimation of UNICEF's director, than after the Asian tsunami, because children watched their classmates die.¹³ Nearly 20,000 children may have physical impairments due to injuries and amputations, and the organization has warned that a "second wave" of deaths may occur if children are not provided with proper health care, clean drinking water, and immunizations before the onset of winter. The concern is that a lack of adequate shelter, combined with poor sanitary conditions, inaccessibility, and extreme cold, could provide a breeding ground for disease. Indeed, there have been some recent reports that pneumonia is spreading among children in earthquake-affected areas of the Himalayas. UNICEF and other agencies are attempting to respond by immunizing as many children as possible against measles, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria and polio.¹⁴

Health and Disease

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 291 of a total 564 health facilities were destroyed in the earthquake, and another 74 were partially damaged. Fewer than half are currently operational. In order to respond to the shortfall, WHO has opened six field offices to coordinate medical response, disseminate health information, and provide disease surveillance. The organization has also been distributing medicine to clinics and hospitals and has hired 125 health workers to carry out health promotion and consultation activities.¹⁵ In addition to concerns about pneumonia mentioned above, the major health problem identified so far has been an increase in Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) due to lack of hygiene and

¹¹ *OCHA Situation Report No. 25*, op cit.

¹² Khan, Aamer Achmed, "Dilemma Over New Quake Shelters," BBC News, December 11, 2005 ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4514312.stm]).

¹³ "The trauma that these children have experienced I think has been particularly even worse than other tragedies like the tsunami, because so many of these kids were in schools... They were in school at that time when so many of the school buildings came down. The ones that survived, many have injuries, many lost friends, they lost teachers, they lost important people in their lives." Quotation by UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman, in "Quake Killed 17,000 Schoolchildren in Pakistan: UNICEF," AFP, October 31, 2005.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; "Winter Trebles Illnesses in Pakistan Quake Zone," AFP, November 30, 2005; "Deadly Pneumonia Hits Pakistan Quake Children," AFP, November 29, 2005; and Haider, Zeeshan, "Immunisation Race Starts in Quake-Hit Pakistan," Reuters, November 13, 2005.

¹⁵ "South Asia Earthquake Situation Report #20," WHO and Pakistan Ministry of Health, November 2-7, 2005. See also earlier reports, all available at [http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/pakistan_earthquake/sitrep/en/index.html].

exposure to cold weather. There has also been some recent concern that several hundred camp inhabitants in Pakistani Kashmir are suffering from acute diarrhea that may indicate cholera. In addition to shelter, WHO has said there is an urgent need for more field hospitals, female paramedics, and improved water and sanitary conditions.¹⁶

Food

The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 2.3 million Pakistanis affected by the earthquake will be reliant upon food aid in the next two to four months, in part because the majority of the earthquake-affected areas in Pakistan had difficulty securing adequate food supplies to begin with. WFP is attempting to pre-position 95,000 tons of food in these areas, and has issued an urgent appeal to donors to help meet its requirements. The situation is made more difficult because many of those affected are staying close to their lands and livestock rather than descending to camps in the lowlands.¹⁷ There are recent indications, however, that some inhabitants of highland areas have begun descending to the valleys as weather has become more inhospitable.¹⁸

Transportation

A common theme underlying the issues above is the continuing inaccessibility of many of the earthquake victims. Three weeks after the earthquake, UN-OCHA estimated that 30% of the affected areas of northern Pakistan were still inaccessible to relief workers, leaving as many as 200,000 people unable to receive assistance. In the days after the earthquake landslides blocked many key road links. Since then, winter conditions have become a bigger problem, as snow has begun to accumulate at higher elevations.¹⁹ For this reason there has been a continuing reliance on aircraft to ferry in supplies and transport the wounded. According to the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC), which is in charge of monitoring and coordinating relief flights, a total of 106 aircraft are currently providing relief supplies in the earthquake area. These include all known assets, including those of the USG, the GoP, other nations, international organizations, and NGOs.²⁰

¹⁶ “South Asia Earthquake Situation Report #24,” WHO and Pakistan Ministry of Health, November 20-25, 2005. See also earlier reports, particularly #18, on WHO website: [http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/pakistan_earthquake/en/index.html]. Cholera report is in Naqash, Zeeshan, “Possible Cholera Outbreak in Pakistan Quake Camps,” AFP, November 6, 2005.

¹⁷ WFP Emergency Report no. 44, op cit. For progress to date on WFP’s food aid, see their website at [<http://www.wfp.org/english/?ModuleID=137&Key=1928>]. See also Lancaster, John, “For Pakistani Villagers, a Risky Decision to Stay,” *Washington Post*, November 1, 2005.

¹⁸ “Pakistan recruits volunteers for rebuilding quake-hit areas,” DPA, November 13, 2005; and USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #27, op cit.

¹⁹ *OCHA Situation Report Nos. 17-25*, op cit.

²⁰ “UNJLC Pakistan Earthquake Bulletin No. 19,” November 19, 2005, available at [<http://www.unjlc.org/pakistan>].

National Response

The Pakistani response to the earthquake has come from many sectors of the state and society. Relief has come not only from the government and military, but also from nongovernmental groups — including militant organizations — as well as individual Pakistanis acting on their own. While the GoP has received credit from several sources for its efforts, it has also been criticized for responding too slowly to the disaster. Several media reports, discussed below, have contrasted this delayed reaction with the swift work of several Islamist political parties and militants, which were on several occasions the first to provide relief to victims.

For its part, the government of India (GoI) has announced that it does not need outside assistance in dealing with the aftermath of the earthquake. This stance has been the subject of some criticism as domestic aid has at times been slow to reach victims.

Pakistan

The GoP has estimated that it will cost Pakistan \$5 billion to recover from the earthquake; the World Bank places the figure at \$5.2 billion²¹. The GoP has responded by mobilizing both civil and military personnel to provide health care, shelter, power, and road clearance. According to fact sheets, the GoP is operating 27 medical treatment centers and has fielded 31 treatment teams.²² The GoP has also set up twelve medical relief camps and three hospital and convalescence centers, both of which are reported as having free space. (This appears to be a change from earlier reporting, which showed total occupancy in the camps of 13,128, well above the stated capacity of 10,575 individuals. According to these earlier reports, the GoP was operating seven hospitals and convalescence centers, with a capacity of 2,920 individuals and an occupancy of 1,874.²³)

Turning to infrastructure repairs, the GoP states that, as of December 12, it had opened all main road arteries except the Laswa Bypass and had restored 70% of lost electrical power, 75% of the water supply, and 96% of telecommunications. An earlier report stated that the GoP had cleared 10-15% of the earthquake debris; this

²¹ “Pakistan: Quake Cost about \$5 billion,” Reuters, October 15, 2005. World Bank figure from [<http://www.worldbank.org.pk/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/PAKISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20723425~menuPK:293057~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:293052,00.html>].

²² Pakistan Federal Relief Commission Press Brief of November 21, 2005, [http://www.earthquakepakistan.com/Press_Brief_latest.htm]. Earlier press briefings divided the GoP response into civil and military components. According to these earlier reports, the Pakistani Army was operating four forward medical treatment centers and had fielded ten treatment teams. An additional 18 surgical teams and 21 health services teams had been fielded from civil sources.

²³ Pakistan Federal Relief Commission Press Release of November 14, 2005, op cit. The information on health teams comes from an undated press release: “Relief Operations, Details,” previously available at [http://www.earthquakepakistan.com/images/foreign_medical_rescue_support.pdf].

data was not available on later reports.²⁴ While an explanation of how the government arrived at these percentages is not provided, an undated but earlier fact sheet from the same source shows more detail on the progress. According to this sheet, the GoP had restored all of the telecommunications linkages in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and 86% of the disrupted linkages in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K). Twenty telephone exchanges (of a total 67 disrupted) had not yet been restored. In the meantime, the government had established 103 free telephone centers for victims, as well as 110 satellite phone centers. Power had been restored, at least partially, to eight of nine affected areas. The government had restored 90% of the water supply to Muzaffarabad and 100% to Rawalkot, and was working to restore supply to Bagh and Balakot. Where the government has been unable to clear roads blocked by debris, it has constructed mule tracks in order to ferry in supplies.²⁵

Criticism of Government Response. President Pervez Musharraf and his government have been criticized by some for their failure to respond more swiftly to the earthquake. It has been reported that the Pakistani Army did not begin bringing supplies into affected areas until October 12, four days after the earthquake struck, and even then, according to some sources, the Army appeared thin on the ground.²⁶ Ayaz Amir, a columnist for the influential — and generally perceived as pro-government — Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, observed,

From Hazara to Azad Kashmir voices arising from the deepest recesses of the heart will tell you how grateful they are to the people of Pakistan who came unbidden in their hour of need. I heard this in Balakot amidst the ruins and I heard this in Muzaffarabad. But as God is my witness in all this wide arc of disaster not one word, not a single one, did I hear in praise of the government or the army.²⁷

Pakistan's opposition parties also criticized President Musharraf and the army for their slow response and alleged mismanagement of the relief operation. They launched a motion shortly after the earthquake calling on the government to "give a full accounting of the relief efforts to Pakistan's parliament. 'The government has failed to organize the crisis management,' their motion stated. 'The matter is very serious and needs to be discussed on the floor of the house.'" So far, nothing has reportedly come of this effort.²⁸ Some opposition members have complained that General Musharraf has used the crisis to aggrandize his own power: "Everything from the relief to the foreign donations is being controlled by the Army, and it is not

²⁴ Pakistan Federal Relief Commission Press Release of November 21, 2005, op cit. Earlier report was accessed November 14.

²⁵ "Relief Operations, Details," op cit. A total of 13,902 of NWFP's 668,136 lines were disrupted; all have been restored. In AJ&K, 20,294 lines (of a total 105,592) were disrupted; 2,831 remain to be restored.

²⁶ Lancaster, John, "Pakistanis Vent Anger About Pace of Relief," *Washington Post*, October 13, 2005.

²⁷ Amir, Ayaz, "The Best and the Worst," *Dawn*, October 28, 2005. See also Roedad Khan, "A President in Crisis," *The Nation*, October 23, 2005.

²⁸ Lancaster, John, op cit.

accountable to anyone,” said Sherry Rehman, a member of Parliament from the opposition Pakistan People’s Party.²⁹

In response to such charges, President Musharraf has asserted that the government and the military have “done a good, if not a very good, job.”³⁰ He compared the Pakistani response to that of the US government in the wake of Hurricane Katrina: “In this type of calamity, no country can have 100 percent success. Even the United States cannot do it.”³¹ Musharraf also criticized the international community for its “double standard” by comparing the earthquake to the Katrina response in another way: “I know that the contributions to Katrina were much more. Did the U.S. need more aid than Pakistan?”³² (According to the State Department’s most recent public information, international contributions to the Katrina relief effort total approximately 20% of the funding pledged so far to Pakistan.)³³ As of the writing of this report, the government appears not to have responded in detail to the charges by the Pakistani opposition that it is cutting Parliament out of the relief effort. It is also worth noting that President Musharraf has decided to postpone a planned purchase of F-16 fighters from the United States in order to concentrate on earthquake relief efforts. Also, the opposition Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) has demanded that the government defer a \$1 billion weapons deal with Sweden.³⁴

Militant Groups Provide Aid. While the GoP was criticized for a slow reaction, it was noted in many sources that some militant groups acted very quickly to provide aid to victims. Jamaat-ul-Dawa, an “Islamic extremist” group with alleged ties to Al-Qaida, has been playing an active role in relief operations in Muzaffarabad, where it is reportedly operating a field hospital that performs twenty surgeries a day. Jamaat-ul-Dawa is an affiliate of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization.³⁵ The *Gulf Times* reports that banned Pakistani militant groups have not only played an active role in providing immediate aid after the earthquake, but

²⁹ Hussain, Zahid, “‘We do not Need Them’; Islamist Groups Take a High Profile in the Kashmir Relief Effort, and Decry an Influx of Western Troops,” *Newsweek*, November 7, 2005.

³⁰ Bokhari, Farhan and Jo Johnson, “Musharraf Defends his Response to Earthquake,” *Financial Times*, October 26, 2005.

³¹ “Musharraf Defends Quake Response, Pledges 500,000 Tents for Survivors,” AP, November 1, 2005.

³² Haven, Paul, “A Month After Monster South Asian Earthquake, Fears that the Tragedy May Just be Beginning,” AP, November 8, 2005.

³³ As of September 16, 2005; does not include some in-kind contributions.

³⁴ See CRS Report RS21584, *Pakistan: Chronology of Recent Events*, by Alan Kronstadt, and “Makdoom Amin Fahim Wants Deferring of Plane Purchases, GHQ Shifting,” Pakistan Press International, November 8, 2005.

³⁵ Philp, Catherine, “Terror Groups Move into Quake Vacuum,” *The Times* (London), October 17, 2005; Hussain, Zahid, “Still No Help for 40 Villages: Pakistan Death Toll Jumps to 73,000,” *Ottawa Citizen*, November 3, 2005. See also Lancaster and Khan, op cit.

are also soliciting and collecting funds for further relief efforts.³⁶ The Islamic militant group Hizbul Mujahideen — which has condemned recent violence against civilians in Kashmir — is also active in the relief effort.³⁷

The same *Washington Post* reporter who observed very few army vehicles on the roads four days after the earthquake noticed that a road he was on, “was crowded with private relief convoys, many belonging to the social service arm of Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan’s largest and best-organized Islamic party,”³⁸ which also has ties to the Palestinian militant group Hamas.³⁹

Although there is some evidence that the United States is receiving positive feedback in Pakistan for its role in assisting relief efforts (see below), some have speculated that the high visibility of Islamist groups may bode badly for both President Musharraf and the United States: “Musharraf, already seen as a Western stooge by Islamist groups, has been criticized for the pace of the operations... That, many worry, is going to affect the popularity of an already unpopular United States and public opinion about Musharraf.”⁴⁰

To some extent, the efforts by Islamist groups to aid victims may be seen as part of a larger outpouring of support by ordinary Pakistanis, who may have found a sense of unity in the crisis that many felt has been lacking in the past. Pakistan has long been a country divided by ethnicity, class, and even, to some extent, religion. A recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project found that, of six Muslim countries surveyed, Pakistanis are far more likely to see themselves as “Muslims first” (79%), than they are as “national citizens first” (7%).⁴¹ According to Husain Haqqani, an expert on Pakistan at the Carnegie Endowment, Pakistan’s disparate elements have been held together for many years with a self-consciously constructed official ideology characterized by the belief that “Pakistan’s success depend[s] on an Islamic nationalism, confrontation with India, and external alliances”

³⁶ Hyat, Kamila, “Banned Groups Back with a Vengeance,” *Gulf News*, November 4, 2005. She writes, “The comments by President Pervez Musharraf that banned groups were free to carry out relief work have brought them out into the open and proved that these forces are entrenched in the country. Some groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammad are reported to have been the first to arrive on the scene in some parts of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and to have swiftly initiated relief work.”

³⁷ Huggler, Justin, “Pakistan Failures on the Road to Disaster,” *The Independent*, November 10, 2005.

³⁸ Lancaster, John, op cit.

³⁹ Lancaster, John and Kamran Khan, “Hard-line Islamists Lead in Pakistan Relief Effort,” *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2005.

⁴⁰ Calamur, Krishnadev, “Pace of Quake Aid May Help Militants,” UPI, October 24, 2005.

⁴¹ Pew Research Center, “Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics,” released July 14, 2005, at [<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=248>]. The six Muslim countries surveyed were Pakistan, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey, Indonesia, and Lebanon.

with the West.⁴² These bonds have worked with varying success over the years, as Pakistani opinions about the West and its relationship to Islam have changed. It is against this backdrop, some experts believe, that the outpouring of support from ordinary Pakistanis may have provided something of a boost to national feeling.⁴³ Others, however, have questioned how long this sentiment will last.⁴⁴

India

As it did after the December 2004 tsunami, the GoI has declared that it does not need foreign assistance in dealing with the October earthquake. “‘We ourselves are taking care of our victims,’ said Navtej Sarna, the Foreign Ministry spokesman. ‘When there are offers by friendly countries and anything is needed, these offers are considered.’” The GoI has responded to the earthquake by moving thousands of tents, blankets, tarpaulins, and woollen garments, as well as tons of medicine, water, and food to the affected area.⁴⁵

As noted above, the earthquake caused far less damage in India than it did in Pakistan. There is a sense, however, that the Indian official response has at least as much to do with political posturing as it does with perceived needs on the ground. The decision to go it alone has attracted some criticism amidst complaints that crucial supplies, such as tents, are failing to reach victims.⁴⁶

U.S. Humanitarian Assistance

Shortly after the earthquake, the United States pledged \$50 million to assist victims; at a recent donors’ conference (see below) USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios announced that the pledge had been increased to \$410 million. This includes \$300 million in assistance from USAID and \$110 million in military in-kind support for relief operations. In addition, Natsios said that at least \$100 million was expected from private donations.⁴⁷ The total package includes both financial and in-kind contributions to humanitarian agencies, logistical and transportation support, and direct assistance to affected populations, including the provision of food and non-food items. A breakdown of USG assistance is provided in **Table 3**.

⁴² Haqqani, Husain, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005, p. 50.

⁴³ See, e.g., Ali Khan, Asif, “Quake Unites the Nation,” *Business Recorder* (Pakistan), October 22, 2005.

⁴⁴ Inayatullah, “Fault Lines of Another Kind,” *The Nation*, October 26, 2005.

⁴⁵ Precise numbers are available in Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Division, Situation Report, October 26, 2005.

⁴⁶ Sengupta, Somini, “Pride and Politics: India Rejects Aid,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 2005.

⁴⁷ The full pledge as announced by Natsios, including anticipated private donations, was thus \$510 million. See USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #26, November 22, 2005.

Table 3. USG Assistance
(As of December 8, 2005)

Agency	Pledge	Value
USAID/OFDA	contributions to U.N. appeal	\$15,917,459
	contribution to ICRC	\$5,000,000
	contributions to NGOs outside of appeal	\$29,758,589
	relief supplies (including transportation)	\$5,240,925
	administration, support to USAID/Pakistan	\$917,266
USAID/FFP	in-kind contributions to WFP	\$6,700,000
USAID/GDA	partnership with Procter and Gamble to provide safe drinking water	\$300,000
State/PRM	contribution to UNHCR (part of appeal)	\$4,000,000
USDA	46,000 tons of Title I wheat	\$12,000,000
Department of Defense	transport, relief supplies (tents, blankets, plastic sheeting, etc.)	\$92,000,000
TOTAL		\$171,834,239

Sources: USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #29, December 8, 2005. A more detailed breakdown of DoD efforts is forthcoming.

Assistance by Source

USAID. USAID sent a Disaster Assessment and Response Team (DART) to Pakistan on October 10. According to USAID, the “mission of the USAID/DART is to assess humanitarian needs, assist with targeting and coordination of USG assistance in conjunction with USAID/Pakistan, and provide technical assistance as required.” The DART is headquartered in Islamabad and has field offices in Mansehra and Muzaffarabad.⁴⁸ It has issued regular field reports (many cited in this report) and cables assessing the progress of relief operations.

DoD. The United State military also began its relief operations on October 10, when it dispatched a transport jet from Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan with twelve pallets of food, water, medicine, and blankets for earthquake victims. The U.S. military has continued to fly in food and supplies, while also airlifting injured Pakistanis to areas where they can get medical help.⁴⁹ Three weeks after the

⁴⁸ USAID website, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/south_asia_quake/].

⁴⁹ Cunningham, James H., “First U.S. Earthquake Relief Supplies Arrive in Pakistan,” American Forces Press Service, Oct. 10, 2005; Garamone, Jim, “U.S. Helicopters, Personnel Helping Pakistan Recovery,” American Forces Press Service, Oct. 21, 2005.

earthquake there were 993 U.S. military personnel and 24 helicopters supporting relief operations in Pakistan, with nine additional CH-47s positioned at Bagram for deployment to Pakistan when space became available. As of November 28, DoD had flown nearly 2,000 helicopter missions delivering over 4,500 tons of relief supplies, and transported nearly 15,000 evacuees and relief workers. In addition, DoD has set up a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) in Muzaffarabad, equipped with 96 beds and two operating rooms. The MASH has performed 276 surgeries and treated 4,937 patients.⁵⁰ Although many of the supplies being sent to Pakistan come from U.S. positions in Afghanistan, the relief effort is not reportedly having a discernable affect on U.S. military activities in Afghanistan.

State/PRM. The Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration has donated \$4 million toward UNHCR's earthquake appeal.

USDA. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided 46,000 metric tons of Title I wheat to Pakistan.

NGOs. U.S.-based NGOs have played a very active role in the relief and recovery effort in Pakistan, several of them with USG funding, including Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps International, and Save the Children.⁵¹ Many more organizations than these have been active, however. A list of U.S. NGOs that are active in the relief and recovery efforts in Pakistan is provided as an appendix to this report.

Private Sector. According to the State Department, Americans in the private sector have so far donated some \$43 million to the South Asia relief effort.⁵² The figure is expected to grow to \$100 million. On October 27, President Bush announced that a group of five CEOs from major American corporations were joining to encourage private sector support for victims of the earthquake. The group has inaugurated a website, organized through The Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy, and is already accepting contributions at <https://www.southasiaearthquakerelief.org/>.

⁵⁰ USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact sheet #27, November 29, 2005; DoD Support to Pakistan Earthquake Executive Summary, November 1, 2005 (as of 0800).

⁵¹ The full list of supported NGOs is available in the USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact sheets, op cit.

⁵² U.S. Department of State, Update on U.S. Response to Pakistan Earthquake, November 4, 2005. Available at [<http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/Archive/2005/Nov/04-42651.html>]. The executives are Jeff Immelt, chairman and chief executive of General Electric; Hank McKinnell, chairman and CEO of Pfizer; Sandy Weill, chairman of Citigroup; Anne Mulcahy, chairman and CEO of Xerox; and Jim Kelly, former chairman and CEO of United Parcel Service of America.

U.S. Response to Other International Natural Disasters

In financial terms, the U.S. government response to the South Asian earthquake falls somewhere in the middle when compared to the amount of aid it has provided in past international natural disasters. **Table 4** presents USG relief assistance for the seven international natural disasters of the past ten years that caused more than 10,000 fatalities.⁵³

Table 4. USG Aid in Past International Natural Disasters

Date	Country	Disaster	Casualties	Total damage	USG assistance ^a
Oct., 1998	Honduras, Nicaragua	Hurricane Mitch	18,799 dead 3,240,000 affected	\$6.04 billion	\$882.9 million
Dec., 2004	Indian Ocean (12 countries)	Earthquake (9.0), tsunami	224,495 dead over 2 million affected	\$7.71 billion	\$882.5 million
Oct., 2005	Pakistan, India	Earthquake (7.6)	74,644 dead 130,000 injured 3 million homeless	\$5.2 billion	\$410 million
Aug., 1999	Turkey	Earthquake (7.4)	15,000 dead 24,000 injured 250,000 homeless	\$10 billion	\$24.46 million
Jan., 2001	India	Earthquake (7.7)	20,005 dead 166,812 injured 4,365,000 affected	\$2.62 billion	\$13.1 million
Dec., 1999	Venezuela	Flood	30,000 killed 2,700 injured 366,547 affected	\$3.16 billion	\$11.05 million
Dec., 2003	Iran	Earthquake (6.6)	26,796 dead 22,628 injured 45,000 homeless	\$1.0 billion	\$5.7 million

Sources: All data, unless noted otherwise, are from EM-DAT Emergency Disasters Database, (<http://www.em-dat.net>). Due to the difficulty of obtaining reliable information, all data should be taken as approximate, especially estimates of “affected” population. See notes for Table 1 and text box below for more qualifications about data.

- a. Data sources for USG assistance: **Hurricane Mitch:** CRS Report RL30083, *Supplemental Appropriations for FY1999: Central America Disaster Aid, Middle East Peace, and Other Initiatives*, by Larry Nowels. **Tsunami:** CRS Report RL32783, *FY2005 Supplemental Appropriations for Iraq and Afghanistan, Tsunami Relief, and Other Activities*, by Amy Belasco and Larry Nowels. A total of \$656 million was approved for the Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, but \$25 million was committed to avian flu. **S. Asia earthquake:** USAID South Asia Earthquake Fact Sheet #27, November 29, 2005. **Turkey earthquake:** CRS Report RS20328, *Turkey: After the Earthquake*, by Carol Migdolovitz. Total includes \$14.46 million in OFDA aid plus \$10 million in assistance from the DoD. The DoD aid was omitted from the

⁵³ This list does not include the European heat wave of 2003, which was responsible for as many as 45,000 deaths, nor the repeated food shortages in North Korea, which are arguably at least as man-made as they are natural.

OFDA Annual Report, which lists the USG total as \$14.39m. **India Earthquake:** OFDA Annual Report FY2001, p. 49. **Venezuela flood:** OFDA Annual Report FY2000, p. 82. **Iran earthquake:** USAID, [<http://www.usaid.gov/iran/>].

Difficulties in Comparing Disaster Assistance

Comparing USG aid figures across disasters is a speculative undertaking. Authority, definitions, and categories of services are not necessarily equivalent across events. Each agency has its own budget, with its own criteria, accounting detail, and regional specificity. The fact that an urgent response to humanitarian crises is often required only compounds the problem. Budgets may reflect regional support, a certain area, specific countries, or a combination thereof over time and with changing events.

Even if we accept that USG aid is comparable across disasters, the disasters themselves are not equivalent: the areas in which they occur differ dramatically in terrain, underlying economic conditions, and governmental capacity. It thus makes little sense to compare, for example, the amount of USG aid delivered per casualty. Even the decision to look at fatalities as the measure of a disaster's severity can be questioned, in part because of the difficulty of obtaining accurate figures. In assessing the amount of aid provided to disasters, it may make more sense to look at the economic damage each has caused. Measured in this way, the seven greatest international natural disasters of the last ten years are: (1) the 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan (\$95 billion in damage); (2) the 1998 flood in China (\$30 billion); (3) the 2004 earthquake in Niigata, Japan (\$24 billion); (4) the 1997 wildfires in Indonesia (\$17 billion); (5) the 1995 flood in North Korea (\$15 billion); (6) the 1995 earthquake in Taiwan (\$14.1 billion), and (7) the 1996 flooding in China (\$12.6 billion). (The United States, if included in this list, would garner a spot for Hurricane Katrina, which caused \$25 billion in damage.)⁵⁴

Once again, however, such a comparison may conceal more than it reveals: a major factor affecting the economic severity of a natural disaster is clearly the economic prosperity of the area in which it occurs. The Kobe earthquake was expensive because Japan was so well off. Furthermore, obtaining reliable and consistent figures for the cost of recovering from a natural disaster is notoriously difficult. Estimates range tremendously depending upon the criteria used — for instance, replacement cost vs. auction cost vs. assessed value of damaged property — and the organization doing the estimate.

Comparing USG and international aid is even more difficult, because of the often dramatically different forms the assistance takes (in-kind contributions vs. cash, for instance). Finally, it is not always evident whether figures represent pledges of support or more specific obligations.

⁵⁴ Estimates are once again from EM-DAT, op cit.

The U.S. Emergency Response Mechanism

The United States is generally a leader and major contributor to relief efforts in humanitarian disasters.⁵⁵ In 2004 the United States contributed more than \$2.4 billion to disaster relief worldwide.⁵⁶ In the case of both the South Asian earthquake and the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, some say that the response will require a major long-term effort beyond the relief and recovery operation currently underway.⁵⁷

The President has broad authority to provide emergency assistance for foreign disasters and the United States government provides disaster assistance through several United States agencies. The very nature of humanitarian disasters — the need to respond quickly in order to save lives and provide relief — has resulted in a rather unrestricted definition of what this type of assistance consists of at both a policy and an operational level. While humanitarian assistance is assumed to provide for urgent food, shelter, and medical needs, the agencies within the U.S. government providing this support typically expand or contract the definition in response to circumstances. Funds may be used for U.S. agencies to deliver the services required or to provide grants to international organizations (IOs), international governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as private or religious voluntary organizations (PVOs). USAID is the U.S. agency charged with coordinating U.S. government and private sector assistance. It also coordinates with international organizations, the governments of countries suffering disasters, and other governments.

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Response can respond immediately with relief materials and personnel, many of whom are already abroad on mission.⁵⁸ It is responsible for the provision of non-food humanitarian assistance and can quickly assemble Disaster Area Response Teams (DARTs) to conduct assessments. OFDA has wide authority to borrow funds, equipment, and personnel from other parts of USAID and other federal agencies. USAID has two other offices that administer U.S. humanitarian aid: Food For Peace (FFP) and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). USAID administers Title II of the FFP under P.L. 480 and provides relief and development food aid that does not have to be repaid. OTI provides post-disaster transition assistance, which includes mainly short-term peace and democratization projects with some attention to humanitarian elements but not emergency relief.

The Department of Defense (DoD) Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) appropriation funds three DoD humanitarian programs: the

⁵⁵ For background information see CRS Report RL32714, *International Disasters and Humanitarian Assistance: U.S. Governmental Response*, by Rhoda Margesson.

⁵⁶ This total is based on FY2004 appropriations for International Disaster and Famine Assistance (IDFA), the Refugee and Migration Account (MRA), and the Emergency Refugee and Migration Account (ERMA), as well as the “emergency” program level for food assistance (PL480 title II).

⁵⁷ See text box above, “Difficulties in Comparing Disaster Assistance.”

⁵⁸ Authorized in Sec. 491-493 of P.L. 87-195, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP), the Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) Program, and Foreign Disaster Relief and Emergency Response (FDR/ER). The office provides humanitarian support to stabilize emergency situations and deals with a range of tasks including the provision of food, shelter and supplies, and medical evacuations. In addition the President has the authority to draw down defense equipment and direct military personnel to respond to disasters. The President may also use the Denton program to provide space-available transportation on military aircraft and ships to private donors who wish to transport humanitarian goods and equipment in response to a disaster.⁵⁹

Generally, OFDA provides emergency from thirty to ninety days after a disaster. The same is true for Department of Defense humanitarian assistance. After the initial emergency is over, assistance is provided through other channels, such as the regular country development programs of USAID.

The State Department also administers programs for humanitarian relief with a focus on refugees and the displaced. The Emergency Refugee and Migration Account (ERMA) is a contingency fund⁶⁰ that provides wide latitude to the President in responding to refugee emergencies. Emergencies lasting more than a year come out of the regular Migration and Refugee Account (MRA) through the Population, Migration and Refugees (PRM) bureau.⁶¹ PRM covers refugees worldwide, conflict victims, and populations of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), often extended to include internally displaced people (IDPs). Humanitarian assistance includes a range of services from basic needs to community services.

International Assistance

In addition to the United States, a great many international actors are also providing relief to the earthquake-affected region, either through financial contributions to the Pakistani government or aid organizations, or by directly providing relief supplies and emergency personnel. While obtaining an exact record of all international contributions is not possible — in part because some assistance is not reported to governments or coordinating agencies — UN-OCHA estimates that the world community, had committed approximately \$619 million to the relief effort

⁵⁹ Section 402 of Title 10, named after former Senator Jeremiah Denton, authorizes shipment of privately donated humanitarian goods on U.S. military aircraft provided there is space and they are certified as appropriate for the disaster by USAID/OFDA. The goods can be bumped from the transport if other U.S. government aid must be transported.

⁶⁰ Governed by P.L. 103-326, the maximum amount is \$100 million. Authorized in sections 2 and 3 or P.L. 87-510 of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962.

⁶¹ When there is functional or programmatic overlap between USAID and PRM, they coordinate with each other and define partners. Traditionally PRM funds UNHCR and other multilateral actors while USAID creates bilateral arrangements with NGOs. This is not a hard and fast rule, however, and both organizations exercise a degree of latitude in their response to crises.

as of November 30. An additional \$1.118 billion has been pledged but not committed.⁶² (These totals include UN-OCHA's tally of U.S. contributions.)

The vast majority of the funding is going to Pakistan. The government of India has, for the most part, declined offers of assistance, stating that it is capable of handling the relief operation on its territory. At a November 19 donors' conference in Islamabad, the international community pledged \$5.4 billion to Pakistan to assist in relief and recovery efforts, exceeding the GoP's goal of \$5.2 billion. Major contributors include the Asian Development Bank (\$1 billion), the Islamic Development Bank (\$501 million) and the European Union (\$270 million).⁶³ Total pledges, according to the government of Pakistan, total \$6.210 billion.⁶⁴

Flash Appeal

On October 11, 2005, UN-OCHA released a multi-agency appeal for \$312 million in urgent humanitarian assistance to earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan. The appeal was revised to \$550 million at a donors meeting on October 26. Despite the higher-than-expected pledge totals announced at the November 19 meeting in Islamabad, the U.N. flash appeal remains seriously underfunded. As of November 30, donors had committed \$151.4 million, or approximately 27.5%, toward this combined appeal.⁶⁵ A breakdown of the appeal by receiving organization is provided in Appendix B. The USG has so far contributed approximately \$16 million toward the appeal (see **Table 3**).

The disparity between overall funding of the relief effort and contributions toward the U.N. appeal is due to several factors. Many countries, including the USG, are providing assistance in the form of direct contributions of items such as blankets, food, and tents, or through the operation of relief flights and logistics support. Much of this assistance is coordinated directly with the GoP or the Pakistani military. In addition to direct bilateral assistance, a good deal of funding has been provided to NGOs operating outside of the U.N. appeal. Please see the final section, Issues for Congress, for more on U.N. performance issues.

⁶² For the latest pledge numbers, see ReliefWeb's site: [<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc105?OpenForm&rc=3&emid=EQ-2005-000174-PAK>]. Note that ReliefWeb's tally does not necessarily match that of any given contributing organization, including the United States, presumably because of delays in recording pledges.

⁶³ Ahmad, Munir, "Pakistan Says \$5.4 Billion in Quake Aid Raised, Surpassing Target at Donor Conference," AP, November 19, 2005.

⁶⁴ Pakistani Federal Relief Commission, [http://earthquakepakistan.com/Press_Brief_latest.htm], accessed December 12, 2005.

⁶⁵ UN-OCHA, *Consolidated Appeal for South Asia Earthquake Flash Appeal 2005*, available at [http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/reports/daily/ocha_R1_A688__05112221.pdf]. Appeal numbers are still being revised. UNHCR, for instance, has recently reduced its goal from \$30 million to \$17 million.

Coordination

With so many international and domestic actors and agencies on the ground, one of the most important issues is coordination of relief activity. As indicated above, several sources indicated that the GoP was slow to organize its own response to the earthquake, let alone coordinate the host of international actors involved in the relief effort. According to assessments of the USAID DART, the GoP's performance has steadily improved in recent weeks, and information is now being effectively centralized at the macro-level by the Federal Relief Commission (FRC). The GoP's performance at the regional level has varied from location to location, and has depended on local capacity and the assistance provided by international relief agencies.⁶⁶

The primary locus of international coordination remains UN-OCHA, which has established four regional coordination centers in Muzaffarabad, Mansehra, Bagh, and Batagram. The major humanitarian actors have divided the relief effort sectorally into ten clusters, with a different organization taking the lead for each sector, as follows: Emergency Shelter (lead: International Organization for Migration [IOM]), Logistics (lead: WFP), Nutrition (lead: WFP), Health (lead: WHO), Water and Sanitation (lead: UNICEF), Education (lead: UNICEF), Protection (lead: UNICEF), Camp Management (lead: UNHCR), IT and Communications (lead: WFP), and Early Recovery/Reconstruction (lead: United Nations Development Program [UNDP]).⁶⁷ Each of the clusters is responsible for feeding information to the FRC, OCHA, and each other. According to some reports, performance has varied significantly from cluster to cluster. This is taken up in the Issues for Congress section.

NATO

NATO, in its first purely humanitarian mission, has contributed to the relief effort by operating two "airbridges" to fly relief supplies into Pakistan. As of December 7, NATO had flown 153 relief flights from its bases in Germany and Turkey, supplying nearly 3,000 tons of supplies, including blankets, stoves, tents, and food. NATO is also currently in the process of deploying "more than 1,000 specialist troops (engineers and medical units) from the NATO Response Force to assist in the relief effort."⁶⁸ Opinion surrounding NATO's involvement in the relief operation, is discussed below.

⁶⁶ Author's interview with USAID DART members, November 22, 2005.

⁶⁷ For cluster information, see the U.N. coordination website at [<http://earthquake05.un.org.pk/>] index.php.

⁶⁸ NATO Relief Mission in Pakistan Fact Sheet (7 December) ([http://www.nato.int/issues/pakistan_earthquake/051207-factsheet.htm]) and NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center (EADRCC) Situation Report no. 14. Precise details about each NATO flight are provided at [<http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2005/10/statistics.htm>]. See also [http://www.nato.int/issues/pakistan_earthquake/in_practice.htm].

Issues for Congress

U.S. Image in Pakistan; Effects on War Against Terror

There has been some discussion in the media about the effects of the U.S. relief effort on Pakistani perceptions of the United States and, more specifically, the U.S. government. This issue is seen as important because President Musharraf's government is a key U.S. ally in the global war on terror. Many high-ranking members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban are believed to remain in the rugged regions of northwest Pakistan, and the ability of the United States to locate and capture them likely depends on Pakistan's cooperation. At the same time, Musharraf's relationship with the United States is not supported by a large portion of the Pakistani population. A widely-cited survey taken by the Pew Center before the earthquake found that 23% of the Pakistani public had a favorable view of the United States, while 51% had a favorable impression of Osama bin Laden.⁶⁹ The degree to which the United States receives positive press for its contributions to the earthquake relief effort may make it easier for Musharraf to support U.S. anti-terror activity in the region.

There does not yet appear to be any systematic public polling of Pakistani opinion on this issue after the earthquake, but several reporters have presented anecdotal evidence suggesting that the United States is reaping something of a "public relations" dividend because of its involvement. It has been reported that U.S. relief efforts in Pakistan have been quite visible on Pakistani television news broadcasts and have thus reached a fairly broad cross-section of the population.⁷⁰ Reporters' encounters with Pakistanis living and working in affected areas support this. One journalist spoke, for instance, of a local community's disapproval of one of their members who was critical of the United States. Several individuals made a point of telling the journalist that they were grateful for Western aid.⁷¹ Academics and commentators as well have reported a perceptible change in Pakistani attitudes toward the United States.⁷² There have been some positive reports in Pakistani media as well, although they are perhaps thinner than in the American press. *The Nation*, for instance, printed a recent opinion piece praising the United States for its efforts in saving Pakistani lives and excoriating critics of the United States.⁷³ This latter sentiment, however, appears to indicate that a sizable number of Pakistanis remain critical of the United States. Indeed, "Pakistani officials and political analysts" have cautioned that any change in perceptions may be limited to moderate, urban

⁶⁹ Pew Research Center, "Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," released July 14, 2005, at [<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=248>]. Only Jordan had higher approval ratings of Osama bin Laden (60%) and lower ratings of the United States (21%).

⁷⁰ Lancaster, John, "Quake Aid Helps U.S. Alter Image in Pakistan," *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2005.

⁷¹ Rhode, David, "For Devout Pakistani Muslims, Aid Muddles Loyalties," *The New York Times*, October 26, 2005.

⁷² King, Ledyard, "U.S. Response to Pakistan Quake Could Help Image among Muslims," Gannett News Service, October 21, 2005.

⁷³ Khan, A. R., "It is not Charity but a Duty," *The Nation* (Pakistan), October 27, 2005.

Pakistanis, and “is unlikely to sway the country’s small core of militants who support Al Qaeda.”⁷⁴

As noted earlier, some commentators have speculated that Pakistan’s slow response could by implication affect public opinion about the United States, which is widely seen as supporting the rule of General-cum-President Pervez Musharraf. The greatest criticism of U.S. involvement appears to come from the Pakistani political opposition, especially from Islamist parties, such as the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), whose leader has said that Pakistan does not need any foreign — including American and NATO — support.⁷⁵ Similar complaints about NATO were expressed by the leader of the opposition party Pakistan Muslim League-N, who worried about the presence of foreign soldiers on Pakistani territory if “tomorrow we have to fight a war with India or any other country.”⁷⁶ In response to such concerns, Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has gone on record saying that NATO poses no security threat: “They are here to help us. Even if they are in uniform, it should not be a cause of concern.”⁷⁷

Burdensharing and Donor Fatigue

Although the United States is the world’s largest provider of foreign assistance, it is often one of the lowest contributors when measured as a percentage of its economic capacity. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United States provided 0.16% of its Gross National Income (GNI) in 2004 for Overseas Disaster Assistance (ODA). By comparison the average of major donors is 0.25%. The percentages for other major donors are as follows: Japan (0.19%), the United Kingdom (0.36%), France (0.42%) and Germany (0.28%).

In previous disasters, pledges made by governments have not always resulted in actual contributions; the earthquake of December 2003 in Bam, Iran, is but one example raised by the United Nations. Concerning the billions of dollars pledged to help the victims of the tsunami disaster, there is skepticism whether all these pledges will be honored. It also cannot be assumed that the funds committed to relief actually represent new contributions, since the money may previously have been allocated elsewhere. It will take time for a more complete picture to reveal how the actual costs of the tsunami disaster will be shared among international donors.⁷⁸ In the case

⁷⁴ Rhode, David, op cit.

⁷⁵ MMA Secretary General and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Maulana Fazlur Rehman, quoted in Raja Asghar, “MMA Opposes Nato, US Forces for Quake Relief,” *Dawn*, October 29, 2005. It was not clear whether Rehman was speaking on behalf of the entire opposition or only his own coalition of six Islamic parties.

⁷⁶ Acting parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, quoted in Amir Wasim, “Govt Criticized for Accepting Nato Forces,” *Dawn*, October 26, 2005.

⁷⁷ Khan, Iftikhar, “Nato Forces Posing no Security Threat: PM,” *Dawn*, November 1, 2005.

⁷⁸ James Darcy, “The Indian Ocean Tsunami Crisis: Humanitarian Dimensions,” *Overseas Development Institute*, January 11, 2005.

of the October South Asia earthquake, Amir Abdulla, WFP Regional Director for the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe has commented that “it is extremely worrying that the international community — which was so generous after the Indian Ocean tsunami — has so far failed to come up with an adequate response to this crisis.” Thus far the United Nations has received 27.5% of its flash appeal of \$550 million.

Some experts are concerned about funding priorities and resources for other disaster areas and the very real possibility of international donor fatigue. Finding a balance between burdensharing on the one hand and donor fatigue on the other often results in delay and can negatively impact U.N. operations during emergencies when immediate funds are required for a response. This question was raised at the U.N. World Summit in September. Key donor countries pledged \$150 million for an emergency fund to allow the United Nations to respond more quickly to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is seen as a way to enable the United Nations to respond more efficiently, effectively, and consistently to humanitarian crises worldwide.

Competing Aid and Budget Priorities.⁷⁹ Amid efforts to tackle rising budget deficits by, among other measures, slowing or reducing discretionary spending, Congress is expected to struggle to find the resources to sustain U.S. aid pledges. After the tsunami disaster, some Members of Congress publicly expressed concern that funding for tsunami relief and reconstruction, which depleted most worldwide disaster contingency accounts, could jeopardize resources for subsequent international disasters or for other aid priorities from which tsunami emergency aid had been transferred.⁸⁰ These accounts were fully restored through supplemental appropriations. At the time, others noted the substantial size of American private donations for tsunami victims and argued that because of other budget pressures, the United States did not need to transfer additional aid. The point remains, however, that when disasters require immediate emergency relief, the Administration may fund pledges by depleting most worldwide disaster accounts. In order to respond to future humanitarian crises, however, these resources would need to be replenished or it could curtail U.S. capacity to respond to other emergencies.

From Relief to Recovery: The Cost of Rebuilding. The earthquake’s effect on Pakistan’s economy remains to be seen. The majority of the country’s industry is located in the south, well away from the earthquake zone. For this reason, some observers believe that the disaster will not have a serious impact on the Pakistani economy’s impressive growth rate. The World Bank, for instance, has only marginally revised its prediction for Pakistan’s FY2006 growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), from 6.5% to 6.1%.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the costs of rebuilding the

⁷⁹ Prepared by Larry Nowels, Foreign Affairs Specialist.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Becker, “No New Funds Needed For Relief, Bush Aides Say,” *New York Times*, January 4, 2005.

⁸¹ The GoP’s initial projection of 7.0% had already been reduced to 6.5% because of lower than anticipated crop yields. See Asian Development Bank and World Bank, *Pakistan 2005 Earthquake Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment*, November 12, 2005, Islamabad, Pakistan, p. 12.

damaged infrastructure in the north as well as caring for the millions of affected Pakistanis is expected to seriously strain the Pakistan government's capacity. Some observers have cautioned against overly optimistic projections.⁸²

The United States currently provides nearly \$700 million to Pakistan in foreign aid, in addition to the \$410 million being provided for disaster relief. There has been no additional request for relief for Pakistan in the FY2006 Foreign Operations legislation, but conferees did issue an invitation to reprogram some of the included funding or to issue a supplemental appropriation.

Transparency. Some members of Congress have also raised concerns about transparency of donor contributions, allocation of monies, and monitoring of projects by the United Nations. The United Nations has said it will improve its financial tracking and reporting system and Pricewaterhouse Coopers is reportedly assisting in that effort. In responding to international disasters, many contributions are also made directly to international organizations and non-governmental organizations, which could raise the same questions about transparency requirements. Moreover, while earmarks and time limits may ensure greater accountability, they can also add pressure for organizations to spend contributed funds, sometimes leading to unnecessary spending, waste and duplicated efforts. Restrictions on funds also often do not allow flexibility to adapt projects to better meet the changing needs on the ground.⁸³

Assessing U.N. Performance

As noted above, the United Nations flash appeal for earthquake relief and reconstruction remains seriously underfunded. By contrast, an international donors' conference in Islamabad garnered more pledges than expected. To a certain extent, this reflects some donors' preference for providing bilateral rather than multilateral funding. According to some reports, however, the initial response of some United Nations agencies to the earthquake was confused and inadequate, prompting donors to commit their resources to other agencies. More recent reporting indicates that many U.N. agencies have improved their performance in recent weeks.

The USAID DART has been critical of some U.N. agencies for an inadequate initial response to the earthquake. Some of the criticism has been structural: it is not clear, DART members say, that the United Nations' "cluster approach" (see above) is the most effective method of disaster management. The problem stems from the sometimes competing demands placed on the cluster leaders: liaising with the host government and gathering and disseminating data, as well as responding to immediate needs and coordinating relief activity. There has been some question about the ability of individual agencies to fulfill all of these functions with limited staffing under emergency conditions.⁸⁴ The cluster system will be discussed at the United Nations on December 12.

⁸² "Global Economic Prospects," Business Recorder (Pakistan), November 23, 2005.

⁸³ Edward Clay, "Lessons for Life," *The Guardian Review*, January 12, 2005.

⁸⁴ Author's interview with members of USAID DART, November 22, 2005.

Some of the DART's criticism, however, reflected a more specific concern that several U.N. agencies were inadequate in their response to the earthquake, prompting USAID, in some cases, to look to NGOs instead of the U.N. system to carry out relief activities. According to the DART, some U.N. agencies were slow to realize the severity of the disaster and to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the relief effort. The DART singled out UNHCR, the WFP, UNJLC, and IOM (not part of the U.N. system but a close collaborator) for particular criticism. The following paragraph summarizes some of the DART's reporting:

UNHCR has been thin on the ground and remains uncertain about its mandate as head of the camp management cluster. DART members reported visiting camps with no visible UNHCR presence. The WFP, which has performed adequately in its role as head of the logistics cluster, has done a worse job in the food cluster. The agency's staff were slow to gather information on NGO activities, leading at times to a duplication of aid delivery efforts. The UNJLC, charged with coordinating transportation, was also slow to ramp up its operations, leading again to a duplication of aid deliveries. Finally, IOM has failed to provide effective leadership of the shelter cluster. Like UNHCR, its staff have appeared unsure of its mandate, and have adopted a facilitative, rather than a leadership, role.⁸⁵

The DART team spoke more favorably of UNICEF and the WHO, both of which, despite rocky starts, quickly built up capacity and assumed leadership of their respective clusters. Both agencies were singled out for effective coordination and implementation.⁸⁶

The DART itself points out that some of its concerns cannot be attributed to U.N. underperformance. To begin with, the DART notes that the best-performing agencies are also the better-funded ones, and states that better funding of the other agencies might positively affect their performance. Beyond this, some concerns have reflected the constraints of the United Nations' particular operational mandate rather than failure on its part. Unlike some NGOs, which may operate more informally, the United Nations must carefully coordinate all of its activities with the Pakistani government. Thus, to the extent that the GoP's initial response to the earthquake was slow and confused, this may have affected U.N. performance as well. Several sources familiar with U.N. operations, including members of the DART, have reported that the United Nations' performance in recent weeks has improved markedly. This bodes well, these sources say, for the operation of relief efforts over the winter.⁸⁷

There does not appear to have been much public criticism of the United Nations' response in the media. The DART's concerns have largely aired within the USG. Perhaps for this reason, the United Nations has not issued any public response

⁸⁵ "Six Weeks after Pakistan's Earthquake: Assessing the UN's Performance," Department of State unclassified cable, Islamabad 17311, November 22, 2005.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Author's interview with DART members, November 22, 2005, and with staff at Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, November 22, 2005.

to such charges. Privately, however, UNHCR officials have acknowledged some missteps, especially in the early days of the relief effort. They were slow to mobilize some assets and reorganize their staff in the field. They have pointed out, however, that most organizations operating in Pakistan faced difficulties at that time. The GoP's initial disorganization had a ripple effect through the humanitarian community; as noted above, the United Nations does not have the liberty to take any significant actions without host government approval and coordination. Despite such difficulties, UNHCR officials note that they immediately opened up their warehouses, releasing thousands of tents and other supplies to the GoP.⁸⁸ UNHCR also reminds visitors to its website that its mandate is to care for refugees and other victims of "man-made" disasters. Its involvement in the earthquake relief operation is a function of its logical and operational capabilities in Pakistan, not its legal or organizational mandate.⁸⁹ UNHCR as well as many of its sister agencies have also argued that they have been hamstrung by poor funding. As of November 30, 2005, the U.N. appeal remains 27.5% funded.⁹⁰

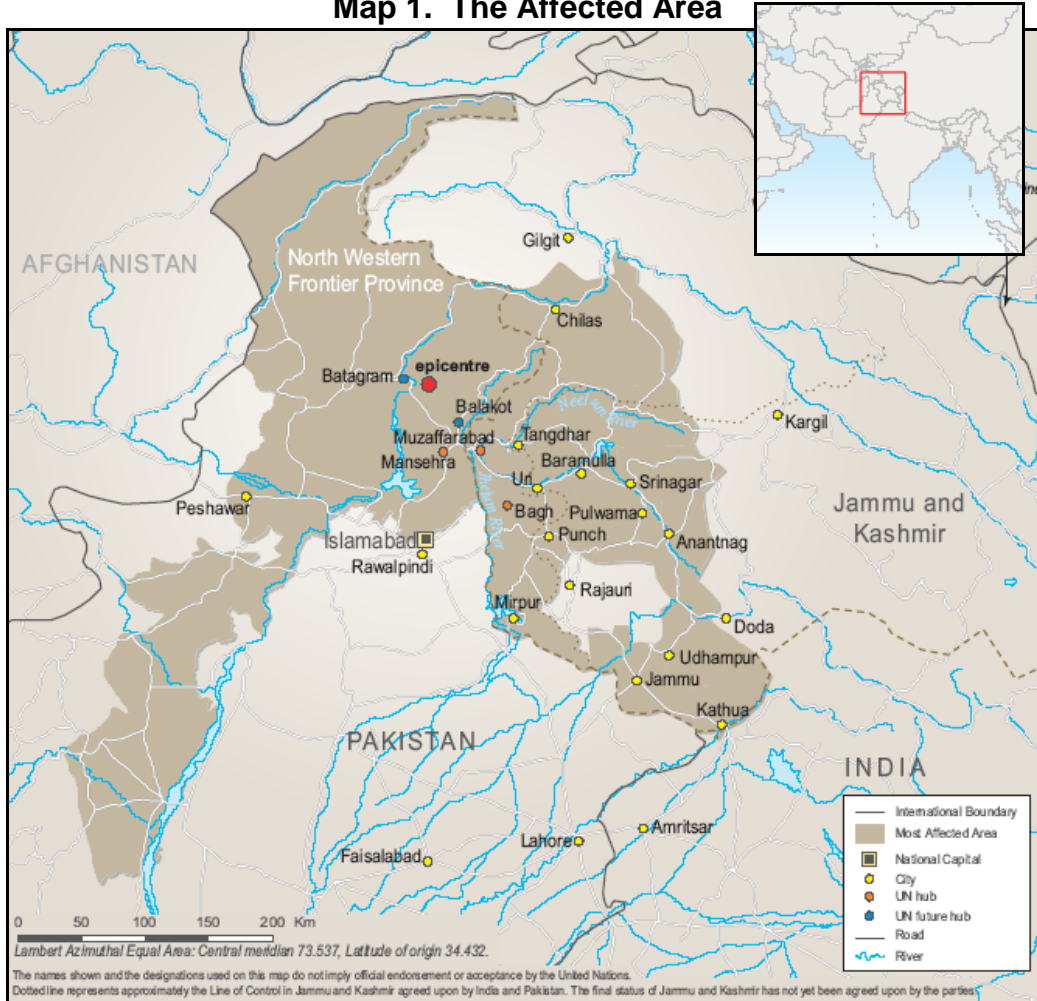
⁸⁸ Author's November 23, 2005, interview with officials at Department of State's PRM Bureau, who are in daily contact with UNHCR officials.

⁸⁹ See [<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/earthquake?page=intro>].

⁹⁰ Details are at [<http://www.reliefweb.int>].

Appendix A: Maps of Disaster Area

Map 1. The Affected Area



Source: OCHA Situation Report No. 13, available at
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/0CCCDBD73C013DD3852570A000658E55/\\$File/rw_EQ_pak201005.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/0CCCDBD73C013DD3852570A000658E55/$File/rw_EQ_pak201005.pdf?OpenElement)

Map 2. The Epicenter and Political Boundaries



Source: USAID, October 13, 2005, available at
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/6571D95BC2D4E2A88525709900761C3B/\\$File/usaidd_EQ_southasia131005.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/6571D95BC2D4E2A88525709900761C3B/$File/usaidd_EQ_southasia131005.pdf?OpenElement)

Appendix B: U.N. Flash Appeal

Organization	Appeal
Australian Aid International	\$850,000
Action Contre la Faim/USA	\$1,000,000
Aga Khan Foundation	\$110,000
Catholic Relief Svcs	\$800,000
Food and Agriculture Organization	\$25,000,000
Greenstar Marketing	\$1,000,000
Int'l Labor Organization	\$3,000,000
Int'l Organization for Migration	\$60,500,000
Int'l Rescue Committee	\$1,500,000
ISCOS (Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation)	\$850,000
ISDR (Int'l Strategy for Disaster Reduction)	\$1,000,000
Mercy Corps Int'l	\$500,000
MDM (Medecins du Monde)	\$500,000
Merlin (UK)	\$850,000
OCHA	\$4,900,000
Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	\$200,000
Save the Children Alliance	\$8,030,000
Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	\$500,000
UNDP	\$90,750,000
UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)	\$1,180,000
UN Environment Program (UNEP)	\$500,000
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	\$1,300,000
UN Population Fund (UNFPA)	\$9,300,000
UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	\$650,000
UNHCR	\$30,000,000
UNICEF	\$92,564,274
WFP	\$181,901,667
WHO	\$27,750,000
World Vision	\$1,100,000
TOTAL	\$549,585,941

Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal (available at [<http://www.reliefweb.int>])