

DOCUMENTS BEING RELEASED

1 - Correspondence between Government Officials Dated 27 September 2007

1. Answers to [name withheld] questions below.

- *how much money we have allocated, committed and disbursed in the last, present and next FY?*

In **FY 06/07** we allocated **£500,000** from GOF. We disbursed all of the allocation to the PTS Commission and achieved almost a full spend. In **FY 07/08** we were allocated \$2.5m from GCPP, reduced to **\$2.3m** once we received confirmation of the Dutch funding for the Uruzgan Provincial office. I have just completed a mid year point evaluation of spend, breakdown below. To date we have made no allocation or bid for funds to support the PTS programme in FY 08/09.

In FY 07/08, the first is \$660,000 in direct support to reconciles channelled through the PTS Commission. In this area we are partnered with Dutch who fund the cost of the Uruzgan provincial office. CSTC-A maintains financial oversight of UK/NL and USAID funding ensuring that there is transparency and the required level of accountability. **[information withheld under section 27 1 (a)]**

Support to PTS Commission

The budget for the period 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008 is \$600,160 plus a 10% contingency giving a total of **\$660,160**, or \$50,000 per month.

For the first six months to 30 September 2007 only **\$150,000** has been spent. The best case scenario is that for the remaining six months of the project that \$50,000 per month will be spent giving a total spend of \$450,000. So we have a potential underspend of **\$210,000**. The written agreement we have with the PTS Commission anticipated that there could well be an underspend. Contractually we are due to make payment in four tranches, however the final tranche is only paid dependent on need and spend.

[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]

- *what we have so far secured through this expenditure in terms of tangible results and how much money we think went astray in Helmand?*

Since 1 January 2006, when UK funding began, **2,003 people have reconciled**. The overall total since the programme began in May 2005 is 4,599. CSTC-A are still working through the back accounts to determine the exact extent of the mismanagement of funds disbursed to the Helmand provincial office between 1 January and 31 March 2007. But the Helmand office was allocated \$7,740 per month during this period, so the potential amount of funds available for pilfering totals \$23,320.

- *When Karzai sees the Prime Minister on 25 October, the PM might offer Karzai funding for other forms of reconciliation work. This funding might be secured through a reallocation from our PTS plans.*

Without reducing the current commitment to the PTS programme for the remainder of the project lifespan (until 31 March 2008) we have an underspend \$210,000 from direct support to the PTS Commission and \$481,000 from info ops giving a total of just under \$700,000. But we could also flag up that although the original approved GCPP bid was for \$2.5m, subsequently we managed to secure nearly \$200,000 of Dutch funding. So we could argue that there is technically a **\$900,000** underspend. We are already working on a paper here on how this underspend could usefully be reallocated to other reconciliation activities.

2. I will expand on the reasons for the underspend in my mid year evaluation.

Subject: Afghanistan: Taliban Reconciliation: The PTS Scheme

1. Could you please give me an account of :

- how much money we have allocated, committed and disbursed in the last, present and next FY?
- what we have so far secured through this expenditure in terms of tangible results and how much money we think went astray in Helmand?

2. The PTS Scheme probably remains a necessary front door for efforts on Taliban reconciliation. I have no wish to pull the plug on our support for it completely. But it is ever less clear that it is what we should be prioritising with our limited resources. So, on the basis of your information (para 1 above) I would like to re-evaluate.

3. I have it in mind that, when Karzai sees the Prime Minister on 25 October, the PM might offer Karzai funding for other forms of reconciliation work. This funding might be secured through a reallocation from our PTS plans.

2. Correspondence between government officials dated 6 December 2007

Subject: GCPP support to reconciliation

Agreed. Let's proceed. Please also inform MOD and DFID that we have agreed this minor variation in the use of project funds.

I'm not convinced this is unclassified.

Subject: FW: GCPP support to reconciliation
Importance: High

The line I took with [name withheld] was that we if we were not to go through the PTS commission we needed to ensure that the same checks and balances on financial elements were in place but that this seemed to be an appropriate use of project funds. Unless you have any objection I will go back and agree on the basis that this is an extension of the existing project and can be met within the projects allocation.

Subject: RE: GCPP support to reconciliation

[Name withheld] email below accurately reflects the conversation we had. I can confirm that we are content for you to proceed on this basis. We will inform the committee of what is, in effect a minor variation, on an existing agreed project. I would appreciate in due course, an update and evaluation on how it is progressing and of course on the potential to expend beyond the one month.

Subject: GCPP support to reconciliation
Importance: High

1. On 5 December I called you to discuss GCPP support to PTS and reconciliation.
2. To summarise, I outlined to you the problems we have in getting [name withheld] to engage with the PTS Commission and vice versa **[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]**. I explained that we didn't want to miss the opportunity that the next few weeks in MSQ might bring and asked if we could channel some of the existing GCPP funds allocated for PTS (which is underspending) through the PRT direct to Wafa for him to use on reconciliation activity for a limited time. You agreed, provided that the following conditions were met:

- the money is used on the same activities as the existing funding to the PTS Commission as already agreed by the GCPP Steering Committee (which are listed in the contract agreement as "financial support to reconciles to include the cost of food, accommodation, small scale media and public relations events, travel to and from Kabul, Kabul Guest House costs and contact and negotiations costs");
- That the PRT have financial accountability;
- Ideally the reconciles would go through the PTS system (either in Helmand or in Kabul if that is not possible) at some point so that they are entered in the stats and receive their letter of reconciliation [I explained that this might be difficult, but that at the very least we would try to get a letter from Wafa to Mojadidi explaining how many people had

reconciled];

- That the support to Wafa was for a limited period only.

3. [Name withheld] has seen these conditions and met with Governor Wafa today to discuss further. [Name withheld] told me that:

- Wafa's plan would be to hand the money to three MSQ elders: Haji Shah Agha (senior and respected elder), Mullah Sadiq (Head of Ulema Shura) and an ex-Mujaheddin commander (details to follow);
- Their remit would be to use it to persuade fighters from within their own groups of influence to stop fighting with the Taleban and to reconcile. This is in some ways better than giving it to Wafa to disperse in that we will have a Military Stabilisation Team in MSQ who will be able to maintain close contact with the three recipients and track how they are spending it. This therefore increases the accountability. These activities would fit under the "negotiation costs" of our current PTS Agreement.
- On duration, he suggests a period of one month and \$50,000 as a starter figure.

4. On the basis of this information are you able to give [Name withheld] the green light to proceed. If you need anything further [Name withheld] is on stand by to provide further information during the course of Friday.

3. Excerpt from Official's briefing for Foreign Secretary meeting on 7 June 2007

2. On Taliban reconciliation, the UK has provided \$1million to the PTS Commission from the Global Opportunities Fund and has committed a further \$2.5million from the GCPP for the coming financial year. The Commission aims to undermine and reduce the influence of the Taleban, and to assure all Afghans that they can have a legitimate and respected part in society, provided they renounce violence and accept the legitimacy of Afghanistan's democratic institutions. The death of Dadullah and the threat he represented to their personal safety, has the potential to increase the number of Taleban willing to join the programme. It is important that Wafa is proactive in reconciliation process. Even though PTS may be weak, a strong Governor's lead can help drive a worthwhile process that can do serious damage to the Taliban at a time when they are weak.

4. Correspondence between government officials on 17 October 2007

Subject: RE: Second payment to PTS

Thanks for organising this. You are right, the next tranche of funds is due to be paid in December. But before you authorise that payment can you please check with me as we may need to reduce the amount dependent on the amount of spend as the project is running an underspend.

Subject: Second payment to PTS

[Name withheld] has passed on your enquiry regarding the payment to PTS.

The second payment to PTS was made on 2 October 2007. The value was \$151,620 USD.

According to my records the next payment is due in December.

5. Correspondence between government officials dated 11 February 2008

Please see the breakdown of the UK funding to the PTS Commission below. The average cost per month for direct support to the PTS Commission [**information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)**] is \$22,000 per month.

So, the cost for Jan- Mar should be around \$66,000. But the closing balance on the PTS account (see the attached copy of the bank statement ending on 24 January) is Afs127, 327.97 or roughly \$25,000. The final payment should therefore be for only **\$41,000**.

Please let me know when this payment has been made.

There should be no need for any further payments to the PTS Commission. I will be writing to the Commission to explain this and will copy you in.

6. Correspondence between government officials, dated 18 February 2008

1. I met Haji Abdul Wahab Agha, head of the Helmand PTS office, today, along with his deputy and the office's administrator.
2. The bulk of the meeting centred on familiar themes - the lack of funding (only \$600 per month) and direction coming from the centre, and Wahab Agha using his own wealth to subsidise the local PTS. He told me that in other provinces, PRTs top-up the funding for provincial PTS offices. (comment: does this claim bear any relation to the truth? I got the distinct feeling I was being taken for a ride as the new boy in town). He repeated the claim he made to [Name withheld] on 14 Jan that links between the PTS and provincial government were poor.

3. Wahab Agha claimed that the PTS office had reconciled 220 Taleban last year, and that he had contact with 53 groups of Taleban and 2 groups of Hezb-e-Islami (one in Musa Qala, the other in the Upper Gereshk Valley) that were active in Helmand. But the lack of funding was preventing more progress - the Taleban knew that they were only likely to get 150 Afs if they reconciled, which wouldn't even cover their transport costs if they were travelling any distance.

Musa Qala

4. I asked about how the government retake of Musa Qala had impacted on reconciliation. Wahab Agha thought it had been positive - the Taleban that he was in contact with said that they had been surprised by how much progress had been made since the ANA-ISAF attack against them, and had said that they were seriously considering reconciling. But they didn't feel it was financially worth their while.

5. I also asked if the PTS had considered using Mullah Salam's damascene conversion to promote reconciliation - as an example to more senior commanders of the kind of "reward" they might get if they gave up the insurgency and worked for GoA. They had, but they felt that Salam's "betrayal" of the Taleban was too fresh - and that his name was mud even among rank-and-file. So they weren't pursuing this at the moment. They did, however, give me two packs of leaflets promoting the PTS that they wanted us to distribute in Musa Qala, Sangin and possibly Now Zad. I'll explore this further with the military - it'll be them that does it, if logistically possible.

Meeting with recently reconciled Taleban

6. Theoretically going to happen next week, but it has been postponed at least three times already. So a case of watch this space, but I will stay in touch with Wahab Agha in any case.

Comment

7. Not much new from this meeting, **[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]**. And if he's telling the truth on the number of Taleban considering reconciling, there could be some major progress this year if the conditions are right.

7. Extract from Correspondence between government officials 12 December 2006 **GOF COUNTER TERRORISM PROJECT: AFGHANISTAN: TALIBAN** **RECONCILIATION PROJECT**

I am writing to let you know that your bid for the above project has been approved. The sum of £500,000 has been allocated to this project to be spent in financial year 2006-07 in accordance with your financial profiling schedule.

8. Internal Paper by Government officials, dated 12 March 2007

GOF FUNDED SUPPORT TO THE PTS COMMISSION: A SNAPSHOT EVALUATION

Background

On 12 December 2006 the Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) agreed on the basis of a project proposal submitted through the British Embassy Kabul and Afghan Group to fund PTS activity in Afghanistan for the period 1 January – 31 March 2007. The total funding to the project was set at £500,000, broken down as follows:

Expense Breakdown	Total
Purchase of vehicles to transport reconciles to/from Provinces	\$ 194,500
PTS/PRT Conference	\$ 4,982
Info Ops Campaign delivered through the US Embassy	\$ 296,422
Farah startup office equipment and costs	\$ 6,265
Vocational program funding	\$ 48,000
Total one time expenses	\$ 582,369
PTS monthly operational budget (Jan, Feb, Mar) 3 X \$138,180. This includes the costs of the Kabul Central office, the 8 Provincial offices and the new offices in Helmand, Uruzgan and Farah.	\$ 414,540
Grand Total	964,709
USD 964,709 United States Dollars = GBP 499,849.22 United Kingdom Pounds	
1 GBP = 1.93 USD	

The purpose of the project was to:

- To re-invigorate the Afghan Government's Taliban reconciliation scheme in the South;
- To undermine and reduce the influence of the Taliban leadership to the extent that they are not able to rely on local communities for support;
- To diminish the Taliban's ability to recruit fighters to maintain the current level of sustained attacks by providing a mechanism whereby those who wish to turn away from violence can; and by creating a structure through which GOA can reach out to disaffected Afghans to encourage mid-level Taliban that there is an alternative, and;
- To encourage Pakistan to support the reintegration of disaffected Pushtoons by taking action against the hardcore Taliban leadership.

The planned activities were:

- To assist the GOA to establish new PTS offices in the south of Afghanistan (especially in Helmand) as part of President Karzai's plans to reinvigorate the reconciliation process;
- To conduct a communications campaign, designed to assure all Afghans that they can have a legitimate and respected part in society, provided they renounce violence and accept the legitimacy of Afghanistan's democratic institutions. It will point to a number of reconciled Talibs in Parliament and in senior official positions;
- To discredit the Taliban by ensuring that information about their atrocities, their involvement in the drugs trade and their disinterest in the welfare of local communities is provided to Afghan spokesmen to use. The new Chief of Staff figure would become a focal point for this, distributing the material along his networks;
- Creation of a fund to provide financial assistance to help those Afghans who wish to reintegrate and to help them build new homes and to start life in the community.

Achievements to date

Dedicated bank account opened – Whilst this in normal terms this would not be seen as an achievement, in the case of this project it should be viewed as a considerable one. Initially when the PTS Commission was established in May 2005 a bank account was opened but donors instead preferred to provide funding in cash in US\$. This has resulted in many problems with accountability and transparency. When the UK insisted that a fresh bank account be opened (in line with GOF requirements) there was a great deal of reluctance on the part of the PTS Commission as 1) they saw this as the international community questioning their integrity and 2) increased accountability left less chance for creative accounting.

Provincial offices now receiving their funding electronically through a bank transfer system – Under the newly established main bank account, where possible sub accounts have been

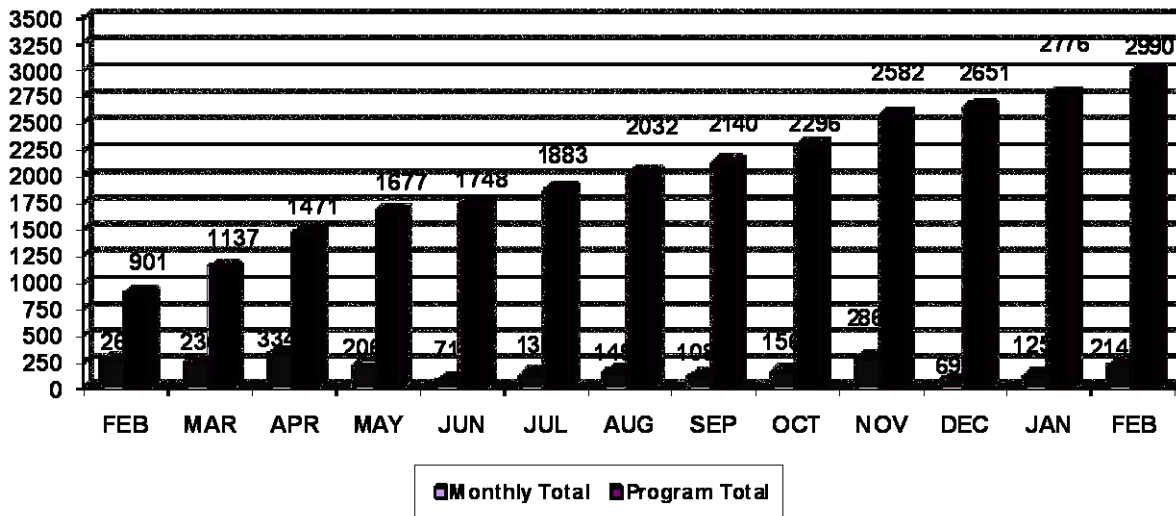
established for the Provincial offices. In February for the first time the monthly running costs were transferred to the accounts of the Provincial Offices therefore cutting out the need for cash payments which had to be collected in Kabul.

New Provincial offices in the south opened in Helmand, Uruzgan and Farah – On 1 March new offices opened and were receiving reconciles (early figures show that 19 people reconciled in Uruzgan alone since opening). This is good news, but the offices took longer to open than we hoped. This was because the project agreement between the UK and the PTS Commission was not signed until 20 January and the Commission was reluctant to open new offices until the funding was agreed. Additionally, the Commission had to select and appoint the new heads of each office and their staff and identify suitable offices in each Province. However, that the offices in the south were opened before Operation Achilles¹ began on 6 March is good news.

[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]

Number of reconciles to date – In January **115** people reconciled (Kapisa - 18, Khost – 19, Kunar – 3, Kunduz – 8, Laghman – 40, Logar – 4, Nangarhar – 28, Parwan – 3 and Sari Pul - 2). In February **214** people reconciled (Herat – 31, Kabul – 11, Kandahar – 40, Khost - 22, Kunar – 4, Kunduz –53, Nangarhar – 9, Paktia –3 and Zabul – 41). To date a total of 329 people have reconciled since the beginning of the project which represents 11% of the total number reconciled since the programme began (2,990) – see break down below.

¹ Operation Achilles is the latest in ISAF's continuing effort to facilitate reconstruction and development and involves some 4,500 ISAF forces, consisting of the British 45 Commando Royal Marines, and about 1,000 troops of the Afghan National Security Forces pushing into the northern Helmand Province and other nearby locations.



On completion of the project I will carry out a more detailed assessment of those who have been reconciled, to gain a better understanding of how many were genuine Taleban who had left the field of battle and how many were low level Taleban or supporters (inevitably in a programme such as this where there is an element of incentive to reconcile, there will be those who are working the system and who are not genuine Taleban).

Future activity beyond 31 March 2007

Using UK funding, the PTS Commission has established a group tasked with investigating what vocational training opportunities currently exist in the provinces where the PTS scheme operates. This will avoid duplication of effort (e.g. purchasing of equipment and hiring rooms). The sub-group will also conduct a survey of reconcilees who have been through the scheme to gauge what kind of training they want/need. The sub-group will present its report with a recommended action plan by 31 March. This will help ensure that the PTS Commission focuses attention on the area of vocational training and comes up with a sensible action plan which can be taken forward after 1 April.

The PTS Commission have also worked up a plan to address the long-term economic needs of PTS reconcilees which will focus on needs of low income households by addressing land ownership through provincial land grants and long-term employment opportunities. The program is planned to be conducted in phases in each region within Afghanistan over an 8 year timeline with Kandahar City as the pilot.

Funding permitting, the PTS Commission would like to open new field offices in Mazar-e-Sharif, Paktika, and Ghazni.

Issues

PTS is far from a perfect science. There are concerns on transparency and accountability and we have taken measures to mitigate against these in our contracting agreement. However, the PTS Commission has expressed its unhappiness with these stringent accounting requirements, which they see as restricting their ability to do what they like with “their” money, and therefore reducing their control over it. They view the electronic transfer of funds to the Provincial Offices as further ebbing away of their authority. They have therefore continually pushed the boundaries of the agreement to suit their own purposes.

But this level of accountability is essential to try to ensure that the money is spent on what it is budgeted for and move the Commission away from the days of cash only funding. It will also help give other donors the confidence to support the programme if they can see that it is being managed transparently. Persuading the PTS Commission of this has been an up hill struggle, and budget issues continue to niggle at the regular working group meetings that I attend. The PTS Commission has on a number of occasions attempted to reallocate funds away from agreed budget lines and divert them for other uses. On 11 March the PTS Commission refused to authorise the expenditure presented to them on the info ops campaign even though it is in the budget which makes up part of the agreement which they signed stating that “they did not think it was a good use of funds”. We are working to overcome this sticking point.

These finance difficulties have had a significant negative impact on the relationship between the PTS Commission and the consultant employed by and funded through the US led Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) to have oversight of the PTS programme (I suspect that these difficulties have had a direct impact on the consultants to decision not to renew his contract at the end of March 2007). Management of the relationship with the PTS Commission is critical to the success of the programme and the new consultant will need to continue to take a firm line.

It is also not clear how many of those reconciled are actually genuine Taleban. There is only limited “quality control” taking place and if a Commander reconciles bringing with him 10 or 20 fighters it is difficult to know if all are legitimate or if some are just brought along with the crowd to make the numbers look better. At a meeting on 23 January [name withheld], commented that perhaps between 40-60% of those reconciled were what he termed “shepherds” and maybe as few as 10% represented hard core Taleban.

The PTS Commission lacks capacity across the board. It is led by Professor Mojadidi, a former Interim President of Afghanistan and Speaker of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House).

[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]

Once the UK funding ends on 31 March, there is no new source of funding identified to support PTS activity. **[information withheld under section 27 2]**

One potential area where we could add value would be to fund the cost of an Adviser to work in the PTS Commission who could build capacity in the area of finance and budget management and office administration. **[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]**

9. Excerpt from a Letter from Lord Malloch-Brown in response to a letter from Lord Hylton

We have given political and financial support to the Government of Afghanistan's mechanism for reconciliation, the Programme Tahkim-e-Solh (PTS). The PTS Commission and programme was established in May 2005. The primary goal of the PTS is to provide former enemy combatants with an opportunity to recognise the Government of Afghanistan as legitimate, and for them to return to civil society and lead normal lives. To date the programme has reconciled about 5,000 combatants – though most of these have so far been low level Taleban. The Government of Afghanistan needs to persuade middle and senior level commanders to change sides.

10. Extract from correspondence between government officials dated 27 July 2006

Strengthening Peace/Reconciliation

4. Mojaddedi was pleased with progress. Almost 2,000 former Taleban and Hekmatyar supporters had been reconciled under the programme so far. About 100 had been processed in the last month. More, including very senior ex-Taleban, were ready to give themselves up, but the main constraint was lack of money. 60% of those joining the programme did so through the Kandahar office, the vast majority coming from Quetta or elsewhere in Pakistan. But they were given only \$20 travelling expenses. If they brought their families with them, there was no infrastructure (housing, jobs etc) to support them. If they left them behind in Pakistan, they were likely to be intimidated/killed. Mojaddedi said he had complained to Gen Eikenberry about this lack of funds. GoA support was moral rather than financial, and he had dipped into his own pocket on many occasions. Despite this, the Commission was looking to open new regional offices in Khost, Zabul, Uruzgan and Helmand. The EU had rented a property for them in Khost and staff had been identified. However, they could not proceed until an operating budget had been found.

11. Correspondence between government officials dated July 26 2007

BACKGROUND

1. The PTS Commission and programme was established in May 2005. They are led by Professor Mojadidi, a former interim President of Afghanistan and speaker of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House). The primary goal of the PTS is to provide former enemy combatants with an opportunity to recognise the Government of Afghanistan as legitimate, and for them to return to civil society and lead normal lives. To date the programme has reconciled about 4,000 combatants - though very close to all of these are low level Taliban. There are 11 provincial offices (Helmand opened in March 2007).

[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]

UK SUPPORT

3. UK support to the PTS Commission for FY 07/08 totals \$2.3 million and is funded through GCPP. **[information withheld under section 27 1 (a)]**

4. So why are we providing funding? Because we recognise that there will be no purely military solution to the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. We need to persuade middle level and senior commanders to change sides. The PTS programme is the only official channel that can try to achieve this aim. Additionally, the programme is supported by the US and Dutch Governments. Our GOF and now GCPP funding has placed us in a good position. We have a seat at the "umbrella group" table, with genuine influence.

WEAKNESSES

5. Perhaps the main weakness of the PTS process is that it focuses on individuals rather than groups. Individuals who reconcile may afterwards be persuaded to return to their former ways. The system must try to bring in Taliban leaders and their followers, by careful and systematic targeting of those judged likely to defect. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen. For example, on 15 July a commander affiliated to Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami party, Elias, and 30 of his men reconciled (the Minister of Defence claims as a result of his negotiations - my eGram 30632/07). We will work with the PTS Commission on this, and to ensure coordination with others engaged in the same effort.

6. There must be a proper system of validation. An assessment by the UN of those reconciled in Kunar Province indicated that perhaps as many as 50% were not genuine fighters. This is an assessment of only a small number (about 80) of reconcilees in only one province: it should not be used as a point of reference for the programme as a whole. But we have encouraged the UN, and the PTS Commission itself, to conduct more studies of this kind, which will help to tighten PTS procedures and highlight where problems exist. But the need for improved validation decreases if individuals are properly targeted in the first place.

7. There also must be follow up with those who have gone through the reconciliation process. The provincial offices do not collect information on why people fought/stopped fighting. Further, once an individual has reconciled, there is no tracking of what happens to him. We have no idea of where they go or what they do, unless they turn up again on the field of battle. We are encouraging the PTS Commission to institute some kind of data collection, so that we can be better informed about those who are reconciled (where they are from, where they were fighting, what employment skills they have - if any - etc). This could be linked to a programme of vocational training. But we also need to think about how to monitor: e.g. persistent PTS contact with reconcilees, a system of spot checks on individuals, checks on names of those who have reconciled against lists of detainees compiled by ISAF to make sure that they haven't returned to old ways.

8. The PTS Commission has an image problem. The Minister of Defence has told us that he believed that people did not trust the commission and did not want to be processed through it. There are also stories that some reconcilees have complained in the past that they have not been treated well when they go through the reconciliation process in Kabul (poor accommodation, etc). So there is a risk that those who may well want to reconcile may be put off doing so. We are working with international partners and the PTS Commission to try to ensure that the messages which are put out are positive, and that key reconcilees are given special treatment, and relocation where needed. But we should also look to see if there might be room to use some of these defections for anti-Taliban propaganda.

COMMENT

9. The PTS Commission and its programme are not perfect. Far from it. PTS is only one of many strands of the reconciliation process. But PTS is the only mainstream system with Presidential approval, and we need to work with it.

12. Correspondence between government officials, dated 15 May 2007

We spoke. You asked for a quick update on where we are with our support to the PTS Commission and its work. To summarise:

The past

We provided \$1million to the PTS Commission from GOF to cover all of its activities between 31 December 2006 - 31 March 2007. I have attached my initial snapshot evaluation of this support. I am currently updating the evaluation [**information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)**]

Both we and the US Embassy are due to meet with the PTS Commission later this week to discuss budget and contract agreement issues. Hopefully this process will be completed by the end of May.

What is our funding for?

Our GCPP Project bid was for a total of \$2.5million broken down as per the attachment below. In summary, we are providing \$46,000 per month to the Commission [**information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)**]

13. Internal paper prepared by government officials

RECONCILIATION

Background

Reconciliation

The PTS (Programme Tahkm-e-solh) Scheme

1. The PTS Commission and programme were established in May 2005 led by Professor Mojadedi, a former interim President of Afghanistan and speaker of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House). Its primary goal is to provide former enemy combatants with an opportunity to recognise the Government of Afghanistan as legitimate, and for them to return to civil society and lead normal lives. As at May 2007, the programme had reconciled approximately 3,600 combatants, although it is not clear how many of these were genuine Taliban members. An UN assessment of 80 reconcilees in Kunar Province indicated that as many as 50% were not genuine fighters opposed to the government, though this should not be extrapolated to the whole programme. BE Kabul are encouraging the UN, and the PTS Commission itself, to conduct more studies of this kind, which will help to tighten PTS procedures and highlight where problems exist.
2. The Office of the National Security Council (ONSC) has governmental oversight for PTS. However, to ensure the programme operates outside formal governmental control and is free from undue influence, the ONSC created an independent Commission. Nonetheless, there are real concerns about transparency and accountability that we are working with the PTS commission to address. The PTS also lacks capacity, even while it is looking to extend its reach into additional provinces with the support of international funding.
3. The PTS Commission hosts regular working group meetings to review results, discuss strategy and programme oversight. The British Embassy, US-led Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) (), ISAF, US Embassy and Netherlands Embassy attend. Separately this group meets informally on an ad hoc basis to discuss issues of concern and to agree common understanding.

Reconciliation Politics

4. Karzai, the Afghans and the internationals are in the main supportive of the efforts of the PTS Commission. However, engaging with the high level leadership would be another matter. The "irreconcilable" would be as big a problem for the Afghans as they are for the US, but if the insurgency is to be ended it will ultimately only be through persuading Taliban commanders to abandon violence. Most of the UK's interlocutors in Kabul, both Afghan and international agree that some serious reconciliation process will be needed. But this is very sensitive territory. **[information withheld under 27 (1) (a)]** The National Front in Parliament will use any stick they can find to beat President Karzai, including the allegation that he is too close to the Taliban, particularly in the run up to the 2009 elections.

UK Contributions

5. The UK has been a key supporter of the PTS scheme, along with the US. We are encouraging other countries to become involved both politically and financially: we have solicited a Dutch contribution of €100k for a PTS office in Uruzgan. The UK has provided around \$1million to the PTS Commission to cover all of its activities between 31 December 2006 - 31 March 2007, with another \$550k to follow.
6. **[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]** At the direct request of the UK, and with our funding, the PTS Commission opened offices in Helmand, Uruzgan and Farah on 1 March 2007. However, operating in Helmand province is not an easy task. Visits to the PTS office by our PRT in Lashkar Gah highlighted a number of problems (office poorly equipped, allegations of financial mis-management etc). We have raised these issues with the PTS Commission, including at the highest level with Professor Mojadedi (during Dr. Howells' visit on 21 May). The PTS Commission has conducted an investigation, which is ongoing, and we have been informed that the Head of the Helmand office will be replaced.

14. Extract from correspondence between government officials, dated 20 November 2007

I said that one of the key problems with the PTS Commission was validating its efforts. An oft used criticism of the programme was that there was no way of knowing if those who had reconciled were genuine opponents of the government. Prof Hashimi (PTS Commission Executive Committee member) had recently visited Kunduz Province and had conducted some research in to the backgrounds of those who had reconciled to gauge whether they were genuine. Could the PTS Commission do more work of this kind which would put them in a good position when trying to attract other donors to the programme? Dr Mojadidi agreed that validation was important. The PTS Commission had a plan to visit all provincial offices by the end of the year. But security was a problem. The PTS Commission also needed the assistance of the Governor, but it was not their job and they (both the PTS Commission and the Governor) lacked the capacity to follow up on every reconcilee. **[information withheld under section 27 (1) (a)]** I

asked whether there was an independent group who could undertake this kind of exercise on behalf of the PTS Commission, along the lines of the Tribal Liaison Office, who had the capacity and were able to operate in areas where security was less of a problem for them. Dr Mojadidi thought that this was a good idea. An independent assessment would obviously be better than one which the PTS Commission conducted themselves. We agreed that we, the US and Dutch would look at the options for who could carry out this work and get back to Dr Mojadidi.

15. Extract from correspondence between government officials dated 25 November 2007

USE OF UK FUNDING

3. Prof Hashimi (executive committee member) gave a short brief on his visit the three provincial offices. He said that a consistent complaint from the Heads of the offices was that they had insufficient funds to encourage people to reconcile. I reminded the meeting that under the terms of the UK funding agreement that there was \$36,000 available each month to be used in direct support to reconcilees as they went through the programme. Each of the 11 provincial offices and the Kabul central office had a indicative budget of \$3,000 each month to cover the cost of food, accommodation, small scale media and public relations events, travel to and from Kabul, guest house accommodation and contact and negotiation costs. Of course, this pot was flexible. If one office reconciled a high number in any one month then they would receive more funds than an office who reconciled no one (although there still may be costs involved in negotiations which proved fruitless). It was up to the provincial offices to be proactive and submit requests for funding based on their activities. Dr Mojadidi understood. He tried to explain the concept to other Commission members present with little success. They claimed that some offices were not being proactive as they were not confident that they would be paid. We agreed that a) we would provide something in writing for the PTS Commission explaining the funding point in detail which they would then translate and disseminate to the provincial offices and b) that we would look at a system where provincial offices could be advanced each month a small amount (several hundreds of dollars) so that they had sufficient funds and confidence to be proactive.

FIGURES

4. We were given a breakdown of the numbers reconciled for the month of November to date - a total 218 (52 Kabul office, Kandahar 26, Nangahar 4, Khowst 7, Kunduz 6, Kunar 9, Uruzgan 29 and **Helmand 85**). [Comment - after the meeting CSTC-A informed me that they believed that there was a discrepancy on the total figure of reconcilees. Their figure was around 100 lower than of the PTS Commission. I am working with CSTC-A/PTS Commission to bottom this out.]

16. Extract from correspondence between government officials dated 20 January 2008

You asked if the SAF bid included costs for engaging Afghan Diaspora. I don't think it does. But [name withheld] will know better.

The outline bid includes £9m for Political/Reconciliation. The "Expert Afghan Government political officers trained to support district and provincial authority in managing tribal relationships including in Helmand" is only one element of that strand. [name withheld] told me that "Support to training and salaries for Afghan district officers and GoA reconciliation (through IDLG, Min of Tribal Affairs and provincial gov), would be £2m, of which £650,000 in Helmand."

17. Extract from Correspondence between government officials, 17 December 2007

"FCO already focused on re-energising the PTS in discussion with some allies at working level in Kabul. The practicalities are not straightforward;

- a) Working with the Afghans to re-energise or replace (at least de facto) the current PTS reconciliation scheme. The UK (and US) are funding the current scheme. GCPP sent in a consultant tasked with rejuvenating the scheme earlier this year, but he resigned due to lack of cooperation from the Afghan PTS leadership, especially on the need for financial transparency. There has been no effective monitoring or evaluation/ validation of PTS reconciliation until now. BEK have started discussions with the US, EU and current head of the PTS scheme. A decision will have to be taken as to whether enhancing the current PTS under current leadership is ever likely to be effective. Options will need to be discussed further with the US and Karzai. There may be scope to train the NSC/ NDS to play a role. However, there is also a big question mark over NDS capacity, even if they were to accept the role and the training."

18. Extract from discussion paper for officials meeting, dated 23 May 2007

7. The PTS Commission and programme were established in May 2005 and is led by Professor Mojadedi, a former interim President of Afghanistan and speaker of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House). Its primary goal is to entice and provide former enemy combatants with an opportunity to recognise the Government of Afghanistan as legitimate, and for them to return to civil society and lead normal lives. As at May 2007, the programme had reconciled approximately 3,600 combatants, although it is not clear how many of these were genuine Taliban. An assessment of 80 reconcilees in Kunar Province by the UN indicated that perhaps as many as 50% are not genuine fighters opposed to the government. The figure should therefore not be extrapolated to the whole programme. BE Kabul are encouraging the UN, and the PTS Commission itself, to conduct more studies of this kind, which will help to tighten PTS procedures and highlight where problems exist.

19. Extract from Government Press Lines, dated January 2008

- We have given political and financial support to the Afghan government's reconciliation scheme. In 2007 we made some £750,000 available directly to the PTS. We are providing funding because we recognise that there will be no purely military solution to the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government needs to persuade middle level and senior commanders to change sides. The PTS programme is the only official channel that can try to achieve this aim.

Background (can be drawn upon): The Afghan Government's mechanism for reconciliation is the "Programme Tahkim-e-Solh" (PTS). The PTS Commission and programme was established in May 2005. It is led by Professor Mojadidi, a former interim President of Afghanistan and speaker of the Mishrano Jirga (Upper House). The primary goal of the PTS is to provide former enemy combatants with an opportunity to recognise the Government of Afghanistan as legitimate, and for them to return to civil society and lead normal lives. To date the programme has reconciled about 5,000 combatants - though almost all of these are low level Taliban. There are 11 provincial offices (Helmand opened in March 2007). The PTS programme is also supported by the US and Dutch Governments (the latter through a contribution the UK is administering on their behalf).

20. Extract from 'Afghanistan: Quick Facts' dated 14 November 2007

- **Reconciliation:** We have provided funding of £1.5 million to the Afghan Government and related projects for reconciliation since January 07. Local PTS (reconciliation) offices opened in Helmand, Uruzgan and Farah in March at UK request.

21. Extract from Afghanistan Supplementaries

Just over 4,500 former Taliban / insurgent fighters have been reconciled under the Programme for Strengthening Peace (PTS scheme), headed by Senate Speaker, and former President, Mojadiddi. We supported efforts to encourage the Taliban to take part in democratic elections.

Reconciled Taliban have already been brought into government, for example, Maulavi Abdul Hakim Munib, who was Governor of Uruzgan from March 2006 until September 2007.