

# Assessing the cost of military operations in Afghanistan and juxtaposing them to the assessed costs of humanitarian assistance (2008-2012)

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## I. Introduction

Since 2001, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been deployed in Afghanistan to support the Afghan government in the provision of security across the country as well as in the development and training of the country's security forces –the Afghanistan National Army and the Afghanistan National Police. In 2014, this mission will come to an end as the Afghan security forces fully assume responsibility. More than 40 countries have provided assistance to ISAF but only a small percentage of them have contributed to the major financial burden of the mission. Meanwhile the international community has invested substantial, albeit much smaller, sums in humanitarian assistance in the country.

Assessing the total costs for participating nations of an operation such as that of ISAF in Afghanistan is potentially a complex exercise, and is open to different interpretations of what should be included. Costs may be short- or long-term, may relate to the military itself, to the wider government, or to society as a whole. Analyses of the costs of a war could, therefore, include: a) costs to the military itself, like salaries and reset costs to equipment and force structure, b) long term costs of medical treatment and disability benefits for veterans of the wars, and c) additional interest payments on government debt created by war spending.<sup>1</sup> This paper only presents and analyses the incremental costs of military operations in Afghanistan for the period 2008-2012. It shows the amounts of funding provided by the U.S., the U.K., Australia, and other major contributors to ISAF in the last four years, and describes the methodological difficulties of providing a total figure for the costs of the military engagement. In parallel it investigates how the sums spent by the same countries on humanitarian aid in Afghanistan have developed in the same period. By comparing these two spending streams we might assess the different priorities of those countries engaged in Afghanistan, and potentially also say something about spikes and calmer phases in the conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Perlo-Freeman S. and Solmirano, C., 'The economic costs of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars', SIPRI Yearbook 2012 (OUP: Oxford, 2012), pp. 159-161.

Section II describes the challenges of estimating the costs of military operations in Afghanistan. Section III presents new estimates on the cost of these operations for the period 2008-2012. Section IV examines the additional costs related to building and expanding the Afghan National Security Forces. Section V focuses on the costs of humanitarian assistance. Section VI concludes.

## **II. Estimating the costs of military operations in Afghanistan**

Since 2001, the international community has been engaged in military operations in Afghanistan through the U.S-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). More than 40 countries have contributed troops to ISAF, although the U.S. is by far the largest contributor with about 68,000 soldiers deployed in Afghanistan as of December 2012.<sup>2</sup> ISAF was created in 2001 under UNSC Res. 1386, that authorized the establishment of a force to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and surrounding areas. In August 2003, NATO assumed leadership of ISAF while the mandate was extended to cover the rest of Afghanistan the same year.<sup>3</sup>

Estimating the total costs of military operations in Afghanistan is challenging for a number of reasons. First, not all the financial information is publicly available and disaggregated for analysis. Disaggregation between the costs of ISAF and the costs of OEF is rare, especially for the analysis of the period 2008-2012. Second, even when we restrict attention to the direct, incremental costs of military operations, obtaining accurate data often requires a careful examination of other sources of funding beyond the Ministries of Defence. The U.K. for example has used funds from a special reserve fund from the Treasury rather than from the core defence budget while the U.S. has used funds from its Overseas Contingency Operations budget and from the Department of State. In Italy, funds for operations are voted separately by Parliament, outside the defence budget and in Spain, most of the funding for military operations overseas comes from a contingency fund outside the Ministry of Defence. Third, it is not always straightforward to find costs for all participating countries. In this study, therefore, we provide figures for the major participants, and estimate the costs for the remainder based on the average cost per troop deployed for those whose costs are known. Taking into account these limitations, this paper provides new estimates of the direct budgetary costs of military operations and those associated to the building up of the Afghanistan National Security Forces.

<sup>2</sup> This figure does not take into account the number of troops deployed under OEF, <[http://photos.state.gov/libraries/usnato/562411/PDFs\\_001/isaf-ana-troops-placemat-dec032012.pdf](http://photos.state.gov/libraries/usnato/562411/PDFs_001/isaf-ana-troops-placemat-dec032012.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force, 'About ISAF', <<http://www.isaf.nato.int/history.html>>

### *The United States*

The United States has been the largest contributor, both financially and in manpower, to military operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. participates in two military operations: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Following the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001; the U.S. government launched military operations in Afghanistan, under the rubric of the 'Global War on Terror'. On October 7, 2001, President George W. Bush announced that the U.S. military had begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist camps and military installations of the Taliban regime.<sup>4</sup> *Operation Enduring Freedom* was initially a U.S. and U.K. military operation, supported on the ground by the Northern Alliance, an Afghan military front who fought the Taliban regime. Other countries like Canada, Australia, Germany and France had committed forces as the war unfolded.

According to a Congressional Research Service report, the cumulative total appropriated for the war in Afghanistan, diplomatic operations and medical care for war veterans was \$444 billion as of 2011.<sup>5</sup> The Department of Defence accounts for the largest portion of funding and includes 'incremental war costs' such as military salaries, training and support activities, weapons procurement, RDT&E or military construction, etc.<sup>6</sup> Another report estimates the direct cumulative costs of the war in Afghanistan at \$640 billion for FY2001-FY2013.<sup>7</sup> A study by Linda Bilmes has conservatively estimated the total costs of wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq at \$4 trillion, including the costs of military operations to date, accrued veteran medical and disabilities costs, indirect costs to the Department of Defence, social costs for veterans' families and interests.<sup>8</sup>

### *The United Kingdom*

Under the name *Operation Veritas*, the United Kingdom joined the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, deploying 1700 soldiers by early 2002.<sup>9</sup> The United Kingdom has been the second largest contributor to military operations in Afghanistan, with more than 9,000 soldiers deployed

<sup>4</sup> 'Text: President Bush Announces Military Strikes in Afghanistan', 7 Oct. 2001, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2001/10/mil-011007-usia01.htm>>

<sup>5</sup> Belasco, A., 'The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11', *Congressional Research Service*, 29 Mar. 2011, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Belasco, (note 5), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, N., 'U.S. Costs of Wars Through 2013: \$3.1 Trillion and Counting. Summary of Costs for the U.S. Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan', 13 Mar. 2013, p. 5, <<http://costsofwar.org/sites/default/files/UScostsofwarsum.pdf>>

<sup>8</sup> Blimes, J. 'The financial legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan: How wartime spending decisions will constrain future national security budgets', HKS Faculty Research Working Paper, March 2013, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Defence, The National Archives, 'Operation Veritas', <<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.operations.mod.uk/veritas/forces.htm>>

under the mandate of NATO at the end of 2012. About £16.7 billion (\$28 billion) have been allocated to ISAF between 2008-2012, funds that have been disbursed from a special Treasury fund, rather than from the core budget of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>10</sup> Conservative figures estimate that by the time ISAF is complete, the U.K. will have spent £20 billion.<sup>11</sup>

With more than 4,000 soldiers deployed in north Afghanistan, *Germany* is the third largest contributor to ISAF. Germany's total financial contribution to ISAF and OEF is difficult to estimate as the Ministry of Defence only provides information on some of the costs. A study on the economic costs of German participation in Afghanistan has estimated that the annual outlays may be three times higher than the budget figures published by the government.<sup>12</sup> According to the 'Antrag der Bundesregierung' (Request of the Federal Government), the costs for the participation of Germany in ISAF between 2008-2012 were as follows: for the period 2007-2008, the costs reached €487 million (of which €350 million were allocated in 2008)<sup>13</sup>, for the period 2008-2009, the costs were budgeted at €688 million (€117.5 million in 2008 and €570.6 million in 2009)<sup>14</sup>, for the period Dec 2009 to Dec. 2010 at €820.7 million (€36 million in 2009 and 784.7 in 2010)<sup>15</sup>, for the period Feb 2010 to Feb 2011, a €271.5 million increase (€226.2 million in 2010, and €45.3 million for 2011)<sup>16</sup>, for the period 1 March 2011 to 31 January 2012, at €1,069 million (979.4 in 2011, and 81.5 in 2012).<sup>17</sup> For the period 1 Feb. 2012 to Jan. 2013 the total amounted to €1,058.9 million, of which €970.9 million correspond to 2012.<sup>18</sup> The total estimated cost of Germany's participation in ISAF between 2008-2012 was €4,2 billion (\$5,6 billion).

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons, Defence Committee, 'Securing the Future of Afghanistan', Tenth Report of Session 2012-13, Volume I: Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence, p. 109, <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmdfence/413/413.pdf>>

<sup>11</sup> Kirkup, J., 'Afghan war will cost British taxpayers £20 billion by the time mission is complete', *The Telegraph*, 19 May 2012, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9275712/Afghan-war-will-cost-British-taxpayers-20-billion-by-time-mission-is-complete.html>>

<sup>12</sup> See Bruck, T., de Groot, O., and Schneider, F., 'The economic costs of the German participation in the Afghanistan war', *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (6): 793-805, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 19 Sept. 2007, <<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/064/1606460.pdf>>

<sup>14</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 07 Oct. 2008, <[http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/einsatzbw/!ut/p/c4/LcgxDoAgDEbhs3gBurt5C3UhP1i0kVQjVRJOr4N50\\_dopi\\_FIytMDkWmkaYofagu1IU9ixZY-4jdbS75X2yNHdK6QaUY1F0cN\\_NSKOjch-4FgPuDXQ!!/](http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/einsatzbw/!ut/p/c4/LcgxDoAgDEbhs3gBurt5C3UhP1i0kVQjVRJOr4N50_dopi_FIytMDkWmkaYofagu1IU9ixZY-4jdbS75X2yNHdK6QaUY1F0cN_NSKOjch-4FgPuDXQ!!/)>

<sup>15</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 18 Nov. 2009, <<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/000/1700039.pdf>>

<sup>16</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 09 Feb. 2010, <<http://www.ag-friedensforschung.de/regionen/Afghanistan/ds-17-00654.pdf>>

<sup>17</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 13 Jan. 2011, <<http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/044/1704402.pdf>>

<sup>18</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 'Antrag der Bundesregierung', 14 Dec. 2011, <[http://www.ndr.de/info/programm/sendungen/streitkraefte\\_und\\_strategien/isafmandat101.pdf](http://www.ndr.de/info/programm/sendungen/streitkraefte_und_strategien/isafmandat101.pdf)>

*Operation Slipper* is the Australian Defence Force contribution to the war in Afghanistan as part of ISAF. Australia's military contribution includes an annual average of 1,550 Australian Defence Force personnel deployed within Afghanistan. These numbers vary depending on operational requirements and shifting seasonal conditions.<sup>19</sup> From 2001 until 2012, Australia has allocated A\$6.5 billion or roughly \$6.1 billion, with the majority of funding being allocated during the period 2008-2012, for a total of A\$5.3 billion.

Australia has also contributed to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund. In 2009, the government agreed to provide an annual contribution of A\$59.3 million to the fund.<sup>20</sup> In addition, over the period 2009-10 to 2012-13, the government agreed to invest A\$1.1 billion for enhanced force protection capabilities in Afghanistan, including protection from small arms, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), indirect fire for Australian troops, as well as improving intelligence and surveillance capabilities, and equipping the forces with enhanced air combat, land and maritime capabilities.<sup>21</sup>

*Canada's* contribution to military operations in Afghanistan was carried out in three phases from 2001 to 2011. Under ISAF, it deployed an average of 2,700 troops between 2008 and 2011 as part of Operation Athena. In December 2011, the Canadian combat mission ended and 2,800 troops left Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> Canada maintains 950 troops as part of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM- A).<sup>23</sup> Between 2008 and 2011, Canada spent C\$4.4 billion in Operation Athena, and since 2011, C\$ 831 million were allocated for transitional and training missions.

*France's* participation in both ISAF and OEF has been under Opération Pamir and Opération Arès. France has been one of the largest contributors to ISAF 'with a peak deployment of 4,000 troops'.<sup>24</sup> Combat troops withdrew at the end of 2012, but a smaller force of 500 remains in Afghanistan to provide train and support to the ANSF.<sup>25</sup> Between 2008 and 2012, France spent €2.2

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Government, "Afghanistan", <<http://www.defence.gov.au/op/afghanistan/info/general.htm>>

<sup>20</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Government, 'Agency Resources and Planned Performance', Portfolio Budget Statements 2009-10, p. 28, <[http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/09-10/pbs/2009-2010\\_Defence\\_PBS\\_03\\_department.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/09-10/pbs/2009-2010_Defence_PBS_03_department.pdf)>

<sup>21</sup> Department of Defence, Australian Government, 'Agency Resources and Planned Performance', Portfolio Budget Statements 2010-11, pp. 23-24, <[http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/10-11/pbs/2010-2011\\_Defence\\_PBS\\_03\\_department.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/10-11/pbs/2010-2011_Defence_PBS_03_department.pdf)> and 'Agency Resources and Planned Performance', Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12, p. 33, <[http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/11-12/pbs/2011-2012\\_Defence\\_PBS\\_03\\_department.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/11-12/pbs/2011-2012_Defence_PBS_03_department.pdf)>

<sup>22</sup> 'Canadian forces leave Afghanistan as mission ends', *BBC*, 6 July 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-14042786>>

<sup>23</sup> Government of Canada, 'Canada's engagement in Afghanistan', <<http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/approach-approche/secure.aspx?lang=eng>>

<sup>24</sup> Keaten, J., 'France Afghanistan war mission ends, troops withdrawn before NATO allies', *Huffington Post*, 20 Nov. 2012, <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/france-afghanistan-war\\_n\\_2164675.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/france-afghanistan-war_n_2164675.html)>

<sup>25</sup> Webb, S., 'Last French soldiers leaves Afghanistan as country fulfils its bid to withdraw troops faster than any other', *Mail Online*, 20 Nov. 2012, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article->

billion (\$3 billion) in combat operations, the fourth largest financial contributor to ISAF.

#### *Other countries*

The countries considered above account for between 76-85% of the troops deployed to ISAF over the period 2008-2012. For the other 48 (45) countries that contributed to ISAF over the period, we estimate the costs based on the average cost per deployed troop for those countries for whom we have data. This calculation is based on figures for 2011, where we had figures for a larger sample of countries than for the whole period. We exclude the US from the average, as their cost per troop is much higher, partly due to the much higher intensity of combat in which US troops were engaged than most other countries, and partly due to the much higher level of spending per soldier afforded by the very high level of US military spending. On this basis, we obtain a figure of \$447,000 per soldier per year, which we apply to produce estimates for the costs for other countries.

#### *NATO common costs*

In addition to the costs borne by individual participating nations, some costs are borne centrally by NATO, which co-ordinates the ISAF mission. This includes items such as the cost of deployed NATO headquarters. These figures are provided by NATO and included here.

### **III. The costs of military operations (2008-2012)**

The previous section shows that despite the availability of some data on the costs of military operations in Afghanistan, there are discrepancies about what is reported by those governments currently engaged in OEF and ISAF making it difficult to provide a total figure. A Development Initiatives report has estimated the cost of foreign military operations in Afghanistan (both NATO and OEF) at \$242.9 billion between 2002-2009 and the costs of building the security sector and counter-narcotics activities at \$16.1 billion during the same period.<sup>26</sup>

Based on an analysis of budget documents and other open sources, SIPRI estimates that the cost of military operations between 2008 and 2012 was \$482.2 billion (see table 1.1).

2235900/Last-French-soldiers-leaves-Afghanistan-country-fulfils-bid-withdraw-troops-faster-other.html>

<sup>26</sup> Poole, L., 'Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows 2002-2010', *Briefing Paper*, Jan. 2011, p. 2, <<http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/gha-Afghanistan-2011-major-resource-flows.pdf>>

**Table 1.1.** Cost of ISAF/OEF (in US\$ millions)

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<i>Country</i>					
Australia	1,232	1,261	1,033	962	519
Canada	414	811	1,269	1,304	1,177
France	634	721	639	538	428
Germany	1,352	1,426	1,339	843	685
United Kingdom	5,864	5,542	5,838	5,952	4,822
United States	106,100	113,000	100,000	52,000	39,000
Others	4,118	5,319	5,341	4,621	3,647
ISAF common costs	601	621	460	416	393
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,315</b>	<b>128,701</b>	<b>115,919</b>	<b>66,636</b>	<b>50,671</b>

Source: SIPRI estimates.

The United States has spent \$410 billion between 2008-2012. The budget almost doubled between 2009 and 2010, when the U.S government authorized the deployment of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan,<sup>27</sup> as part of a strategy to reverse Taliban gains and increase protection across the country.<sup>28</sup> Germany also had a considerable increase between 2009 and 2010, but surprisingly other nations –in particular the U.K. and Canada decreased their financial contribution during the same period.

#### IV. The demands to build (and fund) the Afghan National Security Forces

In addition to the costs of military operations in Afghanistan, the international community has also been supporting and funding the training and expansion of the Afghan National Security Forces. The main contributor to these efforts has been the United States. In fact, the U.S. has funded almost 90 per cent of Afghanistan's security spending.<sup>29</sup> External funding for the ANSF has come from a variety of sources. One is the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), a U.S. and NATO fund created by the U.S. Congress to support the ANSF. Since its creation in 2005, the fund has provided support for equipment and transportation, infrastructure projects, training and operations

<sup>27</sup> 'Barack Obama to announce 30,000 US troops surge to Afghanistan', *The Telegraph*, 1 Dec, 2009, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6703226/Barack-Obama-to-announce-30000-US-troop-surge-to-Afghanistan.html>>

<sup>28</sup> Stolberg, S. and Cooper, H., 'Obama adds troops, but maps exit plan', *The New York Times*, 1 Dec. 2009, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/world/asia/02prexy.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/world/asia/02prexy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)>

<sup>29</sup> According to a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), between FY 2006 and FY 2010, the U.S. provided \$22 billion of the \$25 billion total security spending. See Government Accountability Office (GAO), Afghanistan's Donor Dependence, Briefing of Congressional Committees, September 2011, p. 10, 13, <<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11948r.pdf>>

and salary payments, among others.<sup>30</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) manage the use of these funds. Between 2008-2012, the U.S. has transferred \$31 billion to the ASFF.<sup>31</sup> The Afghanistan National Army Trust Fund (ANATF) is another NATO managed trust fund supporting the Afghan National Army. Since its creation in 2007 and until April 2012, the total amount of contributions and pledges to the fund has reached €500 million (\$620 million).<sup>32</sup> The funds have been used to sustain the recurrent costs of the expansion of the ANA. Established in 2002, the UNDP-managed Law and order Trust Fund (LOFTA) funds primarily the salaries and other costs of the ANP. Between 2008-2010, \$870 million were transferred to the Afghan Ministry of Finance for payment of police salaries.<sup>33</sup> For the period 2011-13, \$1.4 billion were budgeted towards the same end.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) has also provided military aid through its International Military Equipment and Training account. For the period 2008-2012, a little over \$8 million were transferred.<sup>35</sup> It is uncertain the amount of military aid provided by other actors.

**Table 1.2.** Estimated cost of funding ANSF 2008-2012 (in US\$ millions)

ASFF	31,000
ANATF	620
LOFTA	1,826
DOS	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,448</b>

<sup>30</sup> Cordesman, A., ‘Can Afghan Forces be effective by transition? Afghanistan and the Uncertain Metrics of Progress: Part five’, *Working Draft*, 13 June 2011, Center for Strategic & International Studies, p. 13, [http://csis.org/files/publication/110613\\_afghan\\_metrics\\_v.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110613_afghan_metrics_v.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> See various U.S. DoD budget documents.

<sup>32</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Media Backgrounder*, May 2012, <[http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_topics/20120516\\_media\\_backgrounder\\_ANSF\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_topics/20120516_media_backgrounder_ANSF_en.pdf)>

<sup>33</sup> ‘Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOFTA) –Phase VI, 01 January 2011 – 31 March 2013’, Project Document, <<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/projects/AFG/00061104/LOFTA%20ProDoc%20%28Part1%29.pdf>>

<sup>34</sup> ‘Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOFTA) –Phase VI, 01 January 2011 – 31 March 2013’, Project Document, <<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/projects/AFG/00061104/LOFTA%20ProDoc%20%28Part1%29.pdf>>

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Assistance, Summary Tables (various years).



### *Looking ahead*

As the ISAF mission comes to end in 2014, Afghanistan security forces will face the task of fully providing security throughout the country. More than 350,000 forces –both army and police- have been trained and equipped in recent years but those forces will continue to need funding from the international community. It has been estimated that the cost of supporting the ANSF will be of \$4.1 billion a year until 2024, at which point the Afghan government will have to fully assume financial responsibility for its own security.<sup>36</sup> Some governments have already committed to future funding of the ANSF. The UK has pledged £70 million from the Conflict Pool fund.<sup>37</sup> Germany has committed to provide around €150 million a year to help finance the ANSF.<sup>38</sup> The U.S., on the other hand, has awarded Afghanistan the status of a major non-NATO ally, which will make the ANSF eligible for training, loans of equipment, and foreign military financing.<sup>39</sup>

## **V. Assessing the humanitarian aid disbursements**

While the primary objective of this study is to assess and map the evolution of the costs for the international military and security commitment of a selected number countries in Afghanistan over the period 2008-2012, a secondary objective is to put these in perspective by comparing them with the international engagement for humanitarian assistance in the country over the same time period.

Estimating the total costs of humanitarian aid operations in Afghanistan is challenging due to the difficulties to know whether all spending is properly reported and accounted for, whether there may be differing definitions of what constitutes humanitarian aid, and that it may be embedded in other forms of assistance. For the purposes of this study we will use the OECD DAC definition of humanitarian aid, which states that ‘Within the overall definition of official development assistance (ODA), humanitarian aid is assistance designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and after the aftermath of emergencies. To be classified as humanitarian, aid should be consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence’.

<sup>36</sup> House of Commons, ‘Securing the Future of Afghanistan’, Defence Committee –Tenth Report, 26 March 2013, <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmdfence/413/41307.htm>>

<sup>37</sup> House of Commons, (note 36).

<sup>38</sup> Die Bundesregierung (The Federal Government), ‘Afghanistan’, <<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2013/03/2013-03-01-afghanistan-fragen-antworten.html;jsessionid=7D5B53471862D715DA047D4EB00706CB.s4t1?nn=392318#doc694208bodyText6>>

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of State, ‘Major Non-NATO ally status for Afghanistan’, *Fact Sheet*, 7 July 2012, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/07/194662.htm>>

The UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Financial Tracking Service data, that SIPRI has analysed, shows that the spending patterns of the international humanitarian aid to Afghanistan broadly coincide with those of the military and security costs in the country, i.e. a progressive increase over the time period culminating in 2011, albeit with very differing orders of magnitude. Indeed the international funds devoted for humanitarian purposes in the country represent less than 1% of the financial engagement in ISAF/OEF, with a total of \$3.4 billion in humanitarian funds disbursed from 2008 to 2012 compared to \$482 billion in costs for ISAF for the same time period, see table 1.1.

**Table 1.3. Humanitarian donors to Afghanistan 2008-12 (in US\$ millions)**

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<i>Country</i>					
Australia	21.4	11.9	21.4	5.5	13.1
Canada	7.1	46.5	32.6	25.9	45.7
France	2.4	3.8	4.6	8.1	6.1
Germany	33	17.8	32.7	38.2	50.9
United Kingdom	26.1	27.3	3.5	10	25.3
United States	143.2	339.5	156.4	58.9	156.8
All other	280	447.5	479.3	542	286.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>513.2</b>	<b>894.2</b>	<b>730.4</b>	<b>688.6</b>	<b>584.4</b>

*Source:* SIPRI based on OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

While humanitarian suffering may both be a trigger for and a consequence of intensified military engagement it seems as if the major increase in the international engagement during the 2009/2010 “surge” was both preceded and followed by a sustained parallel increase in the international humanitarian engagement. It can thus be argued that the levels of humanitarian funding, analysed in retrospect, may be one indicator of the level and intensity of a conflict.

As much as this finding may be stating the obvious that people suffer as a consequence of military action, it is probably more interesting to note that the financial humanitarian engagement of four of the key military actors in this study seem to have been significantly higher in 2008 than in 2009, which represented a relative low point for these countries, and that it increased again substantially in 2010, to reach top ever levels in 2011.

It may thus be possible to argue, albeit difficult to verify, that there is a causal link between military surge and increased humanitarian funding by these countries. Whether this link is purely events driven, i.e. objective assessments of the military resistance and the degree of humanitarian suffering

respectively, or if there may even be a politically motivated causality is beyond the scope of this study.

Irrespective of the causes it may however be interesting to investigate whether the earlier high levels of humanitarian funding by the countries in this study in 2008 were in fact indirectly an early warning of an intensification of the conflict that was to come in 2009/2010. The wider research question would in this case be whether any increase in humanitarian spending in a given conflict context says something to the world about the severity of a conflict, that merits to be addressed by political and/or military means. While this will be less useful in conflicts that are anyway well covered in the media it may a more useful indicator in more forgotten conflicts, or in conflicts where the overall trend may be clouded or difficult to access, such as in Afghanistan in the time period studied.

Likewise the figures studied show a clear downturn in humanitarian funding in 2012, while the costs for the military engagement remained high. A hypothesis, subject to further research, might thus be that a downturn in humanitarian spending, mirroring a lowered intensity of the conflict, is likely to happen sooner than the decrease of the cost for a military operation. The US, UK, Canadian and Australian humanitarian spending levels seem to have been at its lowest just before the major intensification of the conflict that occurred in 2009 and 2010. However this does not seem to have been the majority view of other humanitarian donors as the overall amount of humanitarian funds that went to Afghanistan in 2009 was almost 20% higher than in 2008. Likewise global humanitarian spending to Afghanistan decreased radically in 2012, to the lowest levels in the time period, while the costs for ISAF remained. It could also be the case that new urgent humanitarian situations across the globe took priority for these donors as shown by the levels of assistance provided to Afghanistan in 2012 in comparison to other countries like South Sudan or Syria. For example, in 2012, Australia's aid to Afghanistan was 8.1% of total aid (\$206.6 million)<sup>40</sup>, Canada's aid to Afghanistan was only 1.4% of total aid (\$500.9 million)<sup>41</sup>, France's aid was 1.9% of total aid (\$129.6 million)<sup>42</sup>, Germany's aid was 5.9% of total aid (\$555.8 million)<sup>43</sup>, the U.K aid totalled 3.3% of total aid (\$781.8

<sup>40</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: Australia in 2012',

<[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC12\\_Y2012\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC12_Y2012__1310110300.pdf)>

<sup>41</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: Canada in 2012',

<[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC37\\_Y2012\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC37_Y2012__1310110300.pdf)>

<sup>42</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: France in 2012',

<[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC72\\_Y2012\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC72_Y2012__1310110300.pdf)>

<sup>43</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: Germany in 2012',

<[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC79\\_Y2012\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC79_Y2012__1310110300.pdf)>

million)<sup>44</sup>, and U.S humanitarian aid to Afghanistan was about \$144 million, which is the equivalent of 3.7% of the total aid for that year (\$3,9 billion).<sup>45</sup>

Taking the example of the United States it may clearly be said that the significantly lower levels of humanitarian funding in 2009 were followed by a sustained increase, which coincided with the military upsurge. The reasons for this are difficult to assess. It could be that this increase was an expression of a political willingness to compensate for the humanitarian suffering that resulted from the intensified military activities, or it could be that the US humanitarian funding instruments are genuinely designed to allocate funds in relation to the degree of assessed humanitarian needs only.

If the amounts spent on humanitarian aid are compared with those spent on the military effort by country, conclusions could potentially be drawn about how these countries' value the two types of interventions respectively. In table 1.4 this is done in a systematic way and some interesting patterns emerge. Of the four "second tier" countries, after the USA and the United Kingdom, in terms of net contributions to ISAF in this study Germany stands out as the country which relatively speaking allocates most resources on humanitarian aid in relation to its military effort.

With an average value of the humanitarian commitment amounting to 3.6% of the cost of the military effort during this time period Germany seems to have attached a far higher importance to these interventions than France, which saw an average of 0,9%. After Germany, Canada and Australia both also seem to have been more generous than France, with a value of 3,2 % and 1,5% of their military effort spent on humanitarian efforts. However if France seems to have devoted a small share of its resources on humanitarian aid, this was still generous, relatively speaking, compared to the ratios for the USA and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom spent only 0,3% of the value of the military effort on humanitarian needs in the time period while the USA spent even less at 0,2%.

<sup>44</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: United Kingdom in 2012', <[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC223\\_Y2012\\_\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC223_Y2012___1310110300.pdf)>

<sup>45</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service, 'Donor Profile: United States 2012', <[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_Rdonor6\\_DC224\\_Y2012\\_\\_\\_1310110300.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_Rdonor6_DC224_Y2012___1310110300.pdf)>

**Table 1.4. Humanitarian and military spending in Afghanistan 2008 -12 (in US\$ millions)**

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	Total
<i>Country</i>						
Australia, hum	21.4	11.9	21.4	5.5	13.1	
Australia, mil	1,232	1,261	1,033	962	519	
Hum as % of mil	1,7%	0,9%	2%	0,6%	2,5%	1,5%
Canada, hum	7.1	46.5	32.6	25.9	45.7	
Canada, mil	414	811	1,269	1,304	1,177	
Hum as % of mil	1,7%	5,7%	2,6%	2%	3,9%	3,2%
France, hum	2.4	3.8	4.6	8.1	6.1	
France, mil	634	721	639	538	428	
Hum as % of mil	0,4%	0,5%	0,7%	1,5%	1,4%	0,9%
Germany, hum	33	17.8	32.7	38.2	50.9	
Germany, mil	1,352	1,426	1,339	843	685	
Hum as % of mil	2.4%	1.2%	2.4%	4.5%	7.4%	3.6%
United Kingdom, hum	26.1	27.3	3.5	10	25.3	
United Kingdom, mil	5,864	5,542	5,838	5,952	4,822	
Hum as % of mil	0,4%	0,5%	0,06%	0,2%	0,5%	0,3%
United States, hum	143.2	339.5	156.4	58.9	156.8	
United States, mil	106,100	113,000	100,000	52,000	39,000	
Hum as % of mil	0,1%	0,3%	0,2%	0,1%	0,4%	0,2%
All other, hum	280	447.5	479.3	542	286.5	
Others, mil	4,118	5,319	5,341	4,621	3,647	
ISAF common costs	601	621	460	416	393	
Hum as % of mil	5.9%	7.5%	8.2%	10.7%	7.1%	7.9%
<b>Total, hum</b>	<b>513.2</b>	<b>894.2</b>	<b>730.4</b>	<b>688.6</b>	<b>584.4</b>	
<b>Total, mil</b>	<b>120,315</b>	<b>128,701</b>	<b>115,919</b>	<b>66,636</b>	<b>50,671</b>	
<b>Hum as % of mil</b>	<b>0,4%</b>	<b>0,7%</b>	<b>0,6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1,1%</b>	<b>0,8%</b>

Source: SIPRI estimates and SIPRI based on OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

## **VI. Conclusions**

A comparison between the accumulated costs for the military engagement in Afghanistan and the parallel costs for humanitarian operations will always be riddled with issues of validity regarding the figures. But assuming that the figures assessed in this study are broadly representative a couple of tentative conclusions may be drawn.

One is the striking difference in the overall financial commitment, with the humanitarian efforts amounting to less than 1% of the military engagement. A second is how similar the spending trends are, with increases and decreases broadly happening similarly, thus confirming both spikes and calmer phases in the intensity of the conflict.

A third, and somewhat surprising, finding is that the spending curve for humanitarian aid seems to be ahead of the military spending curve. This might indicate that humanitarian needs and the response to these, both upward and downward in terms of amounts, are identified and acted upon earlier than the military response. Whether the evolution of funds spent on humanitarian efforts generally could be seen and used, as an indicator of the dynamics and patterns of conflict will not be possible to say based on this study only.

Finally it could be argued that this study says something about how the countries studied value the need to support humanitarian aid in relation to the military effort. Of the six countries studied Germany seems to have been the most generous when it comes to how much it invested in humanitarian efforts in relation to the funds invested in the military operations. Germany was followed by Canada and Australia in a more generous category while France, the United Kingdom and the USA came out as countries that invested considerably less in humanitarian operations in relation to their military spending efforts.