This report is some 300 pages long

Here we reproduce its conclusions and recommendations in the interests of efficiency...

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN AFGHANISTAN

NATO, ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom

1. We conclude that, particularly bearing in mind that this is the first ever NATO deployment outside of NATO's 'area', this has now become a most critical and seminal moment for the future of the Alliance. We also conclude that the failure of some NATO allies to ensure that the burden of international effort in Afghanistan is shared equitably has placed an unacceptable strain on a handful of countries. We further conclude that there is a real possibility that without a more equitable distribution of responsibility and risk, NATO's effort will be further inhibited and its reputation as a military alliance, capable of undertaking out-of-area operations, seriously damaged. We recommend that the British Government should continue to exert pressure on NATO partners to remove national caveats and to fulfil their obligations. We further recommend that where NATO allies are unwilling to commit combat troops, they must be persuaded to fulfil their obligations in ways which nevertheless contribute to the overall ISAF effort, for example, by providing appropriate support including equipment and enhanced training for the Afghan National Army. (Paragraph 23)

2. We conclude that no matter how difficult the circumstances facing the military in

Afghanistan, the use of air power and acts of considerable cultural insensitivity on the part of some Coalition Forces over an extended period have done much to shape negative perceptions among ordinary Afghans about the military and the international effort in Afghanistan. This problem has caused damage, both real and perceived, that will in many instances be difficult to undo. We further conclude that recent policy changes which aim to improve procedures, combined with the commitment of senior military figures to adopting better practices, are a welcome development. We recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government supply us with detailed information on measures that are being taken by Coalition Forces in Afghanistan to provide more pro-active and appropriate protection of civilians in the future. (Paragraph 29)

3. We conclude that the conditions under which prisoners and detainees are treated once in the hands of the Afghan authorities are a matter of considerable concern. We will deal with the issue of treatment of those detained by British forces further in our forthcoming annual Report on human rights. (Paragraph 33)

The role of the United Nations

4. We conclude that while the British Government's support of the UN and for proposals for the UN to play a more significant role as the overarching co-ordinator of the international community's efforts in Afghanistan are to be welcomed, it remains to be seen whether this will involve significant improvements in practice. We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government states what

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evidence there is, if any, of actual improvements in international co-ordination.

(Paragraph 39)

The role of the European Union

5. We conclude that the EU's effort in Afghanistan thus far has not lived up to its potential. We further conclude that there is a need for the EU and its Member States to address the lack of coherence which exists within the EU effort if it is to have a greater impact in the future. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the Government should supply us with updated information on the progress it has made in persuading EU Member States and the European Commission to harmonise and co-ordinate their activities within Afghanistan. (Paragraph 44)

The US and its policy on Afghanistan under the Bush Administration

6. We conclude that some, though certainly not all, of the responsibility for problems in Afghanistan since 2001 must be attributed to the direction of US policy in the years immediately after the military intervention in 2001. The unilateralist tendencies of the US under the Bush administration, and its focus on military goals to the exclusion of many other strategically important issues, set the tone for the international community's early presence in Afghanistan. (Paragraph 49)

Regional neighbours

7. We recommend that the Government continues to make clear to the Iranian leadership the total unacceptability to the UK of Iran's direct and indirect assistance to the Taliban in their operations against Coalition Forces. (Paragraph 53)

8. We conclude that the FCO should continue to use its influence to foster greater co-operation between Afghanistan and its neighbours and recommend that in its response to this Report it updates us on recent developments in this respect.

(Paragraph 61)

CHAPTER 3: WHERE AFGHANISTAN IS NOW: AN ASSESSMENT

The security situation

9. We conclude that the security situation in Afghanistan, particularly in the south where the majority of British troops are based, will remain precarious for some time to come. We further conclude that the current instability is having a damaging effect on Coalition Forces and efforts to engage in reconstruction and development.

(Paragraph 65)

Afghan Security Forces

10. We conclude that the steady progress being made towards the creation of the Afghan National Army stands in sharp contrast to the disappointingly slow pace on police reform, for which Germany was the 'lead nation' before responsibility was transferred to EUPOL. As a consequence, the United States has considered it has no Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan 5 option but to invest a considerable amount of effort and resource in police reform, with assistance and training provided by the US military. We further conclude that military-led reform of civilian police institutions, no matter how well-intentioned, must run the risk of creating a paramilitary-style police as opposed to the civilian force which was originally envisaged and which will be needed in the future.

(Paragraph 79)

Governance, justice and human rights

11. We conclude that the failure to create an effective formal justice system as promised in the Bonn Agreement means that many Afghans remain reliant on traditional,

informal mechanisms of justice. We welcome the Government's policy of developing links between formal and informal mechanisms of justice providing that full access, including to decision-taking, is sought for women in both mechanisms. However, we further conclude that the Government must guard against inadvertently endorsing any measures which could lead to the introduction, through informal mechanisms, of extreme forms of justice which retard or even reverse the slow progress that has been made towards promoting internationally accepted standards of human rights in Afghanistan. (Paragraph 88)

12. We conclude that almost eight years after the international community became involved in Afghanistan, virtually no tangible progress has been made in tackling the endemic problem of corruption, and that in many cases the problem has actually become worse. We further conclude that policy commitments, action plans and all manner of strategies are of little value if they are not accompanied by the political will on the part of the Afghan President and government to drive forward change and tackle corruption at senior levels. Although corruption is a worldwide problem, the situation in Afghanistan is particularly bad and requires an Afghan-led solution if it is to be significantly reduced. (Paragraph 94)

13. We conclude that while much effort has been expended by Western governments on promoting human rights in Afghanistan, the underlying dynamics and cultural views in Afghanistan, amongst men in particular, have not shifted to any great extent. As long as security remains poor, human rights protection will not be considered a priority by many Afghans. (Paragraph 100)

14. We conclude that the proposed "Shia family law" which would have legalised rape

within marriage and legitimised the subjugation of Shia women in Afghanistan, represented an affront to decent human values. We further conclude that it is a matter for alarm that these proposals were considered to be acceptable by President Karzai, by a majority in the Afghan parliament, and by significant elements of Afghan public opinion. This episode highlights the challenges that Afghan women continue to face in realising their basic human rights nearly eight years after the fall of the Taliban government. We conclude that this proposed law has had a detrimental affect on international perceptions of Afghanistan. We welcome the British Government's announcement that it considers those aspects of the law which undermine human rights to be wholly unacceptable. We recommend that the Government keeps us fully informed if the Shia Family Law takes legal effect and, if it does, provides us with an analysis as to whether it has been brought in line with the

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Afghan Constitution, which guarantees equal rights for women, and with the international treaties to which Afghanistan is a party. (Paragraph 114)

Counter-narcotics

15. We recommend that the Government continues to do its utmost to persuade its ISAF partners in Afghanistan to give their full support and co-operation to ISAF's expanded role of conducting operations against drugs facilities and facilitators. (Paragraph 124)

16. We conclude that in accepting the role of Afghanistan's 'lead' international partner in respect of counter-narcotics, the UK has taken on a poisoned chalice. There is little evidence to suggest that recent reductions in poppy cultivation are the result of

the policies adopted by the UK, other international partners or the Afghan government. While the British Government is to be commended for its broad-ranging, holistic approach to tackling narcotics in Afghanistan, it is clear that success depends on a range of factors which lie far beyond the control and resource of the UK alone. The scale of the problem, the drugs trade's importance to Afghanistan's economy and its connection to corruption makes any early achievement of the aspirations set out in the Bonn Agreement highly unlikely. We further conclude that the lead international role on counter-narcotics should be transferred away from the UK, and that the Afghan Government should instead be partnered at an international level by the United Nations and ISAF which are better equipped to co-ordinate international efforts. (Paragraph 126)

17. We recommend that if the Government accepts our recommendation to relinquish the role of lead partner nation on counter-narcotics, it ought to re-focus its effort on facilitating regional co-operation and driving forward diplomatic efforts within international organisations to tackle the trafficking and processing of drugs. (Paragraph 129)

Economic and social development

18. We conclude that long-term investment in education for young people of both genders in Afghanistan is both morally compelling and strategically sensible. It will enable Afghanistan to create an educated and skilled workforce equipped to develop the country and reduce its dependency on foreign funding. We recommend that the Government should consider extending educational twinning programmes to students in Afghanistan in a bid to foster educational opportunities and improve

mutual understanding between students and teachers in the UK and Afghanistan. (Paragraph 136)

19. We conclude that in 2009 economic and social development in Afghanistan continues to lag behind what international donors promised and what, consequently, Afghans had a right to expect as a result of Western intervention in their country. We further conclude, however, that the success of recently initiated Afghan-led projects, such as the National Solidarity Programme, which appear to offer a highly effective model for delivering change, is encouraging. We welcome the British Government's support of this and similar initiatives which are having an impact on Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan 7
the lives of large numbers of people in rural Afghanistan. We recommend that the Government continue to examine how it can encourage other international donors to support Afghanistan in this way. We further recommend that in its response the FCO sets out what it considers the most important priorities of the international community in Afghanistan to be. (Paragraph 140)

The international community's approach and impact

20. We conclude that the international effort in Afghanistan since 2001 has delivered much less than it promised and that its impact has been significantly diluted by the absence of a unified vision and strategy, grounded in the realities of Afghanistan's history, culture and politics. We recognise that although Afghanistan's current situation is not solely the legacy of the West's failures since 2001, avoidable mistakes, including knee-jerk responses, policy fragmentation and overlap, now make the task of stabilising the country considerably more difficult than might otherwise have been

the case. We recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO sets out what lessons have been learned from the mistakes made by the international community over the last seven years. (Paragraph 145)

CHAPTER 4: PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AND ROLE IN RELATION TO AFGHANISTAN

Pakistan's strategic importance

21. We conclude that Pakistan's strategic importance derives not only from the sanctuary that its semi-autonomous border areas provide to extremists who seek to cause instability in Afghanistan, but also because of connections between the border areas and those involved in international terrorism. We further conclude that it is difficult to overestimate the importance of tackling not just the symptoms but the root causes that enable this situation to persist. (Paragraph 158)

22. We conclude that allegations raised during our inquiry about the safety of nuclear technology and claims of possible collusion between Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, and Al Qaeda are a matter of deep concern. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the Government sets out its assessment of these allegations and the extent of the threat that this poses. (Paragraph 160)

Recent Pakistani responses to militancy

23. We conclude that there is a pressing need for the Pakistani government to address the role that some madrassahs play in the recruitment and radicalisation process in Pakistan. We recommend that the British Government sets out in its response to this Report what discussions it has had with the Pakistani Government about this issue, and whether it has raised allegations of Saudi Arabian funding of radical madrassahs

with the Saudi authorities. (Paragraph 164)

24. We conclude that Pakistan's civilian government has recently taken some important steps to counter insurgency at a considerable cost in terms of military lives lost. We welcome the increasing recognition at senior levels within the Pakistani military of

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the need for a recalibrated approach to militancy but we remain concerned that this may not necessarily be replicated elsewhere within the army and ISI. We conclude that President Zardari's recent remarks that he regards the real threat to his country as being terrorism rather than India are to be welcomed. However, we further conclude that doubts remain as to whether the underlying fundamentals of Pakistani security policy have changed sufficiently to realise the goals of long-term security and stability in Afghanistan. (Paragraph 176)

Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan

25. We conclude that addressing long-standing concerns of the Pashtun populace on either side of the Durand Line and the respective governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan in relation to the Durand Line itself, could, in the long term, help to increase bilateral co-operation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, reduce sources of political friction and help tackle the causes, and not just the symptoms, of poverty and weak governance which Al Qaeda and other insurgent groups have exploited so effectively in recent years. Given the UK's close relationship with both Afghanistan and Pakistan and its historical ties to the region (which include the imposition of the Durand Line by British colonial administrators), we further conclude that the UK has a moral imperative to provide whatever diplomatic or practical support might be

deemed appropriate by the relevant parties to assist them in finding ways of addressing the many problematic issues that are the Durand Line's legacy. (Paragraph 182)

US attacks on targets in Pakistan

26. We conclude that the use of US drones to attack Al Qaeda targets in Pakistan may have resulted in serious damage to Al Qaeda's network and capabilities. However, we also conclude that these attacks have damaged the US's reputation among elements of the Pakistani population who regard them as a violation of Pakistani sovereignty. We further conclude that drone attacks remain a high-risk strategy and must not become a substitute for the challenging yet vital task of building a Pakistani civilian government counter-terrorist capacity and army capable of conducting counter-insurgency operations and dealing with extremist threats. (Paragraph 199)

India

27. We reiterate our previous conclusion from our South Asia Report that the UK should encourage India and Pakistan to make further progress on the peace process, but that the Government should not get directly involved in negotiations nor try to suggest solutions to the question of Kashmir, unless requested to do so by both India and Pakistan. (Paragraph 201)

28. We conclude that the US plan marks an important and long overdue recalibration of its relationship with Pakistan. Its emphasis on civilian aid, with appropriate conditions attached, has the potential to ensure that long term improvements in Pakistan's political, economic and social capacity limit the appeal of extremism. We further conclude that it is crucial that the US addresses Pakistan's fears, both

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legitimate and perceived, relating to India and reassures Pakistan about the extent and nature of the US's long-term commitment to Pakistan. (Paragraph 211)

CHAPTER 6: THE UK'S MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

The UK's expanding mission in Afghanistan

29. We conclude that the UK's mission in Afghanistan has taken on a significantly different, and considerably expanded, character since the first British troops were deployed there in 2001. The UK has moved from its initial goal of supporting the US in countering international terrorism, far into the realms of counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics, protection of human rights, and state-building. During our visit we were struck by the sheer magnitude of the task confronting the UK. We conclude that there has been significant 'mission creep' in the British deployment to Afghanistan, and that this has resulted in the British government being now committed to a wide range of objectives. We further conclude that in its response to this Report, the Government should set out, in unambiguous terms, its first and most important priority in Afghanistan. (Paragraph 225)

The UK deployment to Helmand

30. We conclude that the UK deployment to Helmand was undermined by unrealistic planning at senior levels, poor co-ordination between Whitehall departments and crucially, a failure to provide the military with clear direction. We further conclude that as the situation currently stands, the "comprehensive approach" is faltering, largely because the security situation is preventing any strengthening of governance and Afghan capacity. The very clear conclusion that we took from our visit to

Helmand is that stabilisation need not be complicated or expensive, but it does require provision of security, good governance, and a belief within the local population that ISAF forces will outlast the insurgents. (Paragraph 236)

The role of, and impact on, the British armed forces

31. We conclude that the Government must ensure that our armed forces are provided with the appropriate resources to undertake the tasks requested of them, particularly in an environment as challenging as Helmand. We further conclude that in spite of well-documented difficulties, British armed forces are now gradually beginning to create and sustain the conditions that make it possible to extend good governance and the rule of law in the most heavily populated areas of Helmand. We conclude that the support provided by additional equipment and by the US 'surge' of troops in Helmand will be of considerable assistance, and is greatly to be welcomed. (Paragraph 248)

The role of FCO staff in Afghanistan

32. We conclude that the ability to engage with Afghans in key local languages is crucial to the UK's effort in Afghanistan and we are concerned that nearly eight years after intervening in Afghanistan, the FCO still has no Pashtu speakers. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the FCO sets out why this situation

exists and what it is doing, as a matter of urgency, to rectify the situation. (Paragraph 250)

33. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the FCO provides details of the length of Postings which it uses in Afghanistan and whether it is considering

introducing longer tour lengths to ensure continuity of knowledge and experience. (Paragraph 252)

CHAPTER 7: THE UK'S NEW STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: A WAY FORWARD?

Justifications for the UK's continued presence in Afghanistan

34. We conclude that while the drugs trade has an invidious effect on governance on Afghanistan and ultimately, through the flow of heroin to the West, has a damaging impact on the UK, the Government's assessment that the drugs trade in Afghanistan is a strategic threat to the UK which, in part, merits the UK's continued military presence in Afghanistan, is debatable. (Paragraph 274)

35. We conclude that the expansion of the stated justifications for the UK's mission in Afghanistan since 2001 has made it more difficult for the Government to communicate the basic purpose of the mission and this risks undermining support for the mission both in the UK and in Afghanistan. We welcome the Government's recognition that its strategy must be grounded in realistic objectives. However, it is not easy to see how this can be reconciled with the open-ended and wide-ranging series of objectives which form the current basis for UK effort in Afghanistan. We recommend that in the immediate future the Government should re-focus its efforts to concentrate its limited resources on one priority, namely security. (Paragraph 278)

36. We conclude that there can be no question of the international community abandoning Afghanistan, and that the issues at stake must therefore be how best the UK and its allies can allocate responsibilities and share burdens so as to ensure that

the country does not once again fall into the hands of those who seek to threaten the security of the UK and the West. We further conclude that the need for the international community to convey publicly that it intends to outlast the insurgency and remain in Afghanistan until the Afghan authorities are able to take control of their own security, must be a primary objective. (Paragraph 279)

The UK's strategy for Pakistan

37. We welcome the Prime Minister's announcement of £10 million to support the Pakistani government's counter terrorism efforts and we recommend that the Government intensifies its help to Pakistan in this area. (Paragraph 289)

38. We conclude that the Government is correct to place a heavy emphasis on Pakistan in its new strategy for Afghanistan, published in April 2009, and to seek to build on the broad engagement that the UK has had with Pakistan in relation to counter-terrorism since 2001. We welcome the focus on long-term solutions and the Government's commitment to assisting Pakistan to strengthen its civilian

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institutions. We conclude the balance of the UK's relationship with Pakistan particularly regarding its co-operation on counter-terrorism has to be improved. (Paragraph 294)

39. We recommend that the Government should consider how best it can work with allies to develop an international policy for assisting the Pakistani government in dealing with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. (Paragraph 295)

40. We recommend that it its response to this Report, the Government provides us with an update on what measures it is implementing in Pakistan to strengthen the

integrity of its visa application and processing operations against fraudulent applications and to what extent and in what ways it is co-operating with the UK Borders Agency on this matter. (Paragraph 297)

CHAPTER 8: TOWARDS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT?

41. We conclude that a negotiated, Afghan-led political settlement with broad popular support represents the only realistic option for long-term security and stability in Afghanistan. However, we further conclude that there can be no serious prospect of meaningful discussions until Coalition Forces and the Afghan National Security Forces gain, and retain, the upper hand on security across the country, including in Helmand, and are then able to negotiate from a position of strength. For these reasons we conclude that the current increased military activity is a necessary pre-requisite for any long-term political settlement. (Paragraph 311)

42. We welcome the commitment of the US and UK governments to ensuring that human rights are not undermined in any future reconciliation process and we conclude that the meaningful participation of women is an essential element in any negotiated reconciliation, as has been the case in many other post-conflict peace processes. (Paragraph 3180