



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 March 1983

*ms*

Prime Minister

AR 15/3

copy: Mr. Nicholls

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Dear John,

Afghanistan

The Prime Minister will wish to know that Mr Raison has decided that the ODA should make a further contribution of £2 m. in the current financial year towards the cost of relief work for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. This will be announced by Mr Raison in the House on 21 March. I enclose the proposed answer to a PQ from Mr Teddy Taylor.

It would be useful to secure as much publicity as possible for this decision to demonstrate our continuing concern for the refugees. The ODA will be preparing a press release. The purpose of my writing is to suggest that the Prime Minister may like to refer to our latest contribution if a suitable opportunity occurs at press conferences following the EC meeting in Brussels next week.

Your ever

*John Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

Mr Teddy Taylor (Southend East): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will increase the aid commitments to Pakistan for 1983 to assist with the Afghan refugee problem; and if he will make a statement.

DRAFT ANSWER

As my right hon Friend the Prime Minister said, in a written reply to my hon Friend on 24 February, we remain deeply concerned about the plight of Afghan refugees. I am glad, therefore, to announce a further contribution of £2m to be paid to relief agencies working with the refugees. This brings the total value of our commitments since January 1980 to £13.7m. In addition we are providing aid costing over £16m for Pakistan's border provinces of North-West Frontier and Baluchistan which are the areas most seriously affected by the influx of refugees.

## NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

### 1. Level of future aid to refugees

It is not normally the practice to provide advance details of how much we expect to spend on individual programmes in a given year. However, in addition to the £2m we expect to make further commitments of aid in 1983 both for the Pakistan programme and specifically for the Afghan refugees.

### 2. Agencies receiving the £2m refugee aid

UNHCR: £1.7m

International Committee of the Red Cross: £0.1m

League of Red Cross Societies: £0.2m

### 3. Previous aid to refugees

In 1981 we spent £20.6m on Pakistan and £3.25m (including our share of EC commitments) on Afghan refugee relief. In 1982 the figures were £12.6m on Pakistan and £4.1m on Afghan refugee relief. An additional £1m for Afghan refugees, which was announced by my right hon Friend the Minister of State (Mr Hurd) when he visited in November, has already been paid over to relief agencies in 1983.

### 4. Terms and channels of aid

The aid is a grant, not a loan. It is given mainly as cash and food contributions to the relief agencies, particularly the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and to the Pakistan Government.

### 5. Tying of aid

Our aid programme to Pakistan is largely tied, although there are two projects which provide money for local costs. Aid for refugee relief work is not tied, in order to allow relief authorities maximum flexibility.

6. Nature of programme in Pakistan

We are providing aid for railways, ports, irrigation, mining and a number of other sectors.

7. Illegal Narcotics

We are responding positively to a request by the Pakistan Government for advisory assistance in narcotics law enforcement. [Not for use: Pakistan is now the main source of illegal supplies of heroin to the UK].

Political

8. Why give aid to a military dictatorship?

We have enjoyed good relations with successive governments in Pakistan. Our aid is intended to benefit the people of Pakistan. We support the stand of the present government over Afghanistan, and admire in particular their help for the Afghan refugees.

9. Violations of Human Rights

HMG does not consider it would be either helpful or productive to make representations to the Government of Pakistan about alleged violations of human rights in Pakistan. Nevertheless, HMG will continue to use appropriate ways of making it clear that we deplore violations of human rights wherever they occur.

10. Corporal Punishment of Women

We have noted these reports. It would not be appropriate for HMG to comment on the internal regulations of Pakistan.

## BACKGROUND NOTE

### General

1. Close relations with Pakistan are important to the UK, especially since the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Ministers have visited regularly, including the Prime Minister in 1981 and Mr Hurd in November last year. Princess Anne will visit in May, in her capacity as Patron of the Save the Children Fund.

### 2. Afghan Refugees

Refugee numbers total nearly 3 million - almost 20% of 1979 population of Afghanistan. Strain on Pakistan economy is considerable but Pakistan Government is coping well. UK contributions to relief work made direct and through European Community since crisis began in January 1980 now total £13.7m. This figure includes the additional £2m to be announced by the Minister on 21 March.

### 3. Mr Taylor's visit to Pakistan

Mr Taylor visited Pakistan for a week from 30 January together with Sir Julian Ridsdale MP. They called on President Zia on 1 February. Mr Taylor visited a refugee camp near Peshawar and met the Governor of the North West Frontier Province. Later in his tour, he told the English Speaking Union in Karachi that he would do all he could to persuade the British Government and others to do more to help the refugees.

### 4. Mr Taylor's Recent PQs

Mr Taylor put down a PQ to the Prime Minister on 24 February about an international conference on Afghan refugees. (Flag A attached).

### 5. Human Rights in Pakistan

There is some public and Parliamentary concern about political persecution in Pakistan and about recent reports of severe /sentences,

sentences, including flogging, imposed on women. No representations have been made to the Pakistan Government.

### Economic

6. Pakistan's economic growth record over last 5 years has been encouraging (GDP has been increasing at average of more than 6% per annum over last four years).

### Aid Levels and Terms

7. In 1981 UK aid to Pakistan and Afghan refugees totalled £20.6m and £3.25m respectively. In 1982 the comparable figures were £12.6m and £4.1m. [Not for use: 1983/84 Aid Framework for Pakistan is £15m (rising to £21.5m in 1985/86). There is expected to be provision of £1m food aid for Afghan refugees in 1983/84 and cash and further food aid provision in subsequent years.] In addition we have written off official debt worth an extra £4m per annum to Pakistan under the RTA Agreement.

8. All aid is on grant terms. Main projects include assistance to Pakistan Railways (£29m) and Port Qasim (£14m). The Pakistan programme is largely tied to British goods and services, though two projects include provision for local costs in Pakistan (total £7m approx for local costs). Aid for Afghan refugees is untied to allow maximum flexibility to relief authorities.

### Baluchistan and N W Frontier Tribal Areas

9. The Pakistan Government has published special development plans to improve the economic stability of areas bordering the Afghanistan frontier. We have given £10m programme aid which is generating local rupee (counterpart) funds for projects in these regions. We have also agreed direct project support worth over £6m for irrigation and mining projects in these areas. We are looking at other proposals.

22 March 1983

AFGHANISTAN

Thank you for your letter of 18 March about Mr. Raison's decision that HMG should make a further contribution of £2 million in this financial year towards the cost of relief work for Afghanistan refugees in Pakistan. No suitable opportunity occurred for the Prime Minister to make use of this information at her Press Conference in Brussels today but she has noted the contents of your letter.

AJC

J.E. Holmes Esq,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.