A soldier in full combat gear, including a helmet with a night vision device and sunglasses, is sitting in the driver's seat of a vehicle. The scene is chaotic, with a large explosion behind him, sending a massive cloud of dust and debris into the air. The sky is blue, and some greenery is visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is one of intense action and danger.

Lessons (not) Learnt in Afghanistan Introduction

**Some facts about the international
intervention in Afghanistan**

Cost of intervention in Afghanistan ** Good subject for paper!*

Date range: October 2001 until end 2014 (13 years)

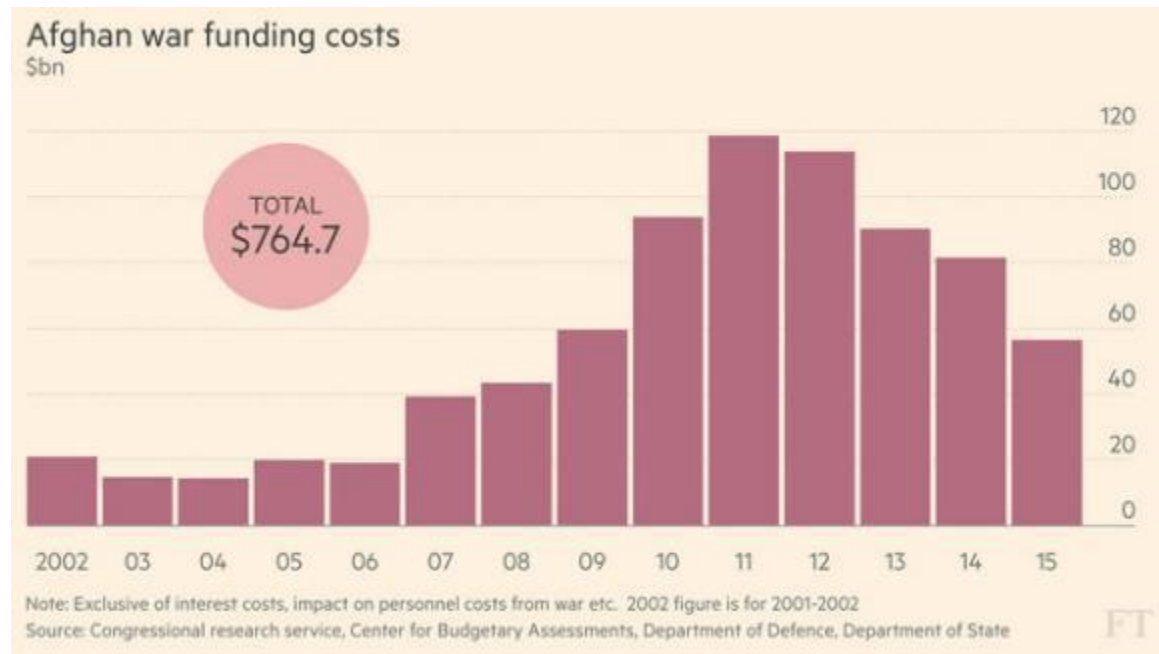
The US: According to Congressional Research Services, cost = 765 billion USD (ref [FT](#))

According to FT, cost to US =
1 trillion \$ of which 90-95%
spent on military
(80% of total disbursed
under Obama)

Iraq cost 1.7 trillion USD.

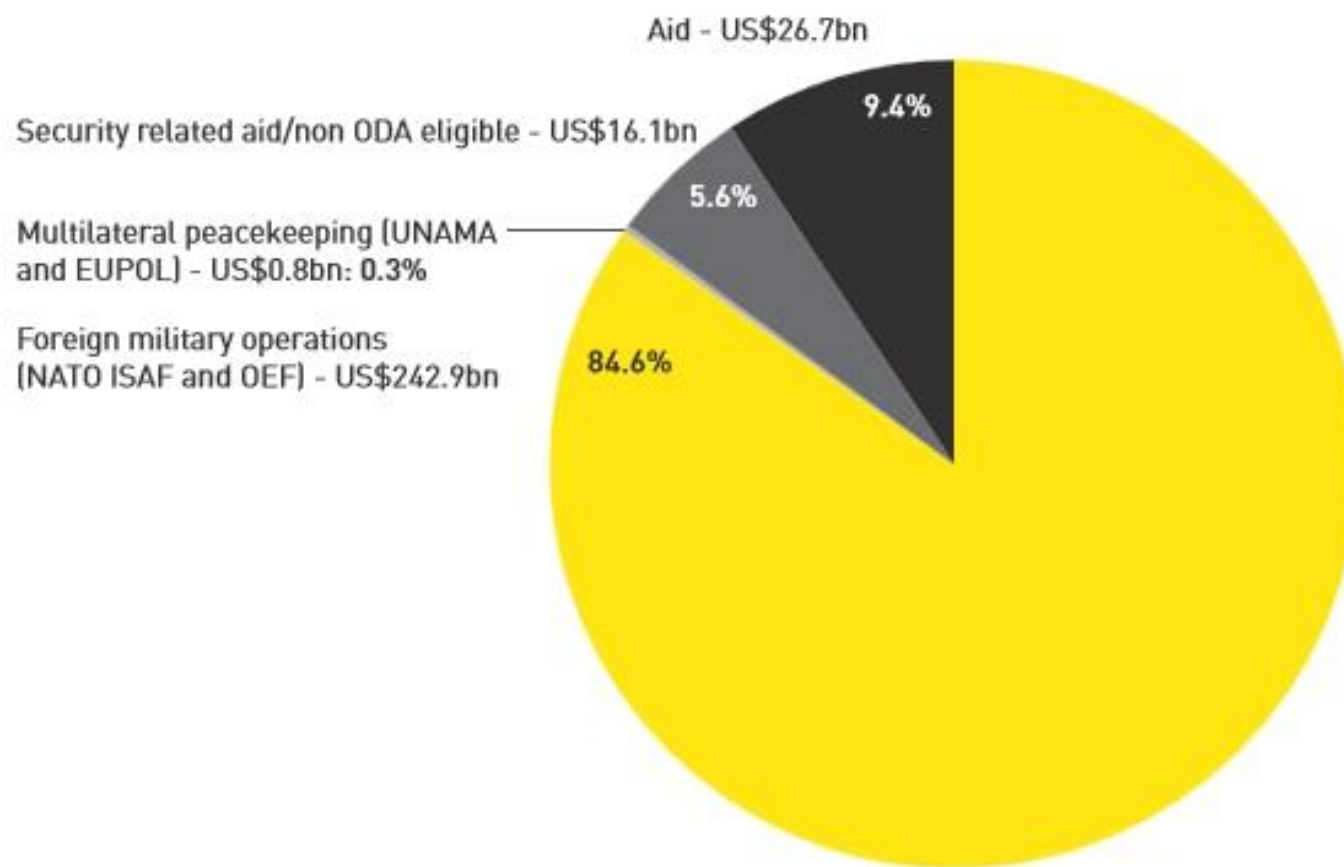
Aid: 6-8% of total, rest spent
on military

Comparison: US federal debt
= 18 trillion USD



One forecast places future medical costs for both Iraq and Afghanistan wars at \$836bn over coming decades

FIGURE 1: INTERNATIONAL AID, SECURITY AND MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 2002–2009



Sources: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data; Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) Donor Assistance Database (DAD); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) database of Multilateral Peacekeeping Operations; and Development Initiatives research

Cost of intervention in Afghanistan/2. The UK in Helmand

The UK spent 20 to 37 billion £ on the military intervention (sources [RUSI](#) and [The Guardian](#))

2500 \$/day

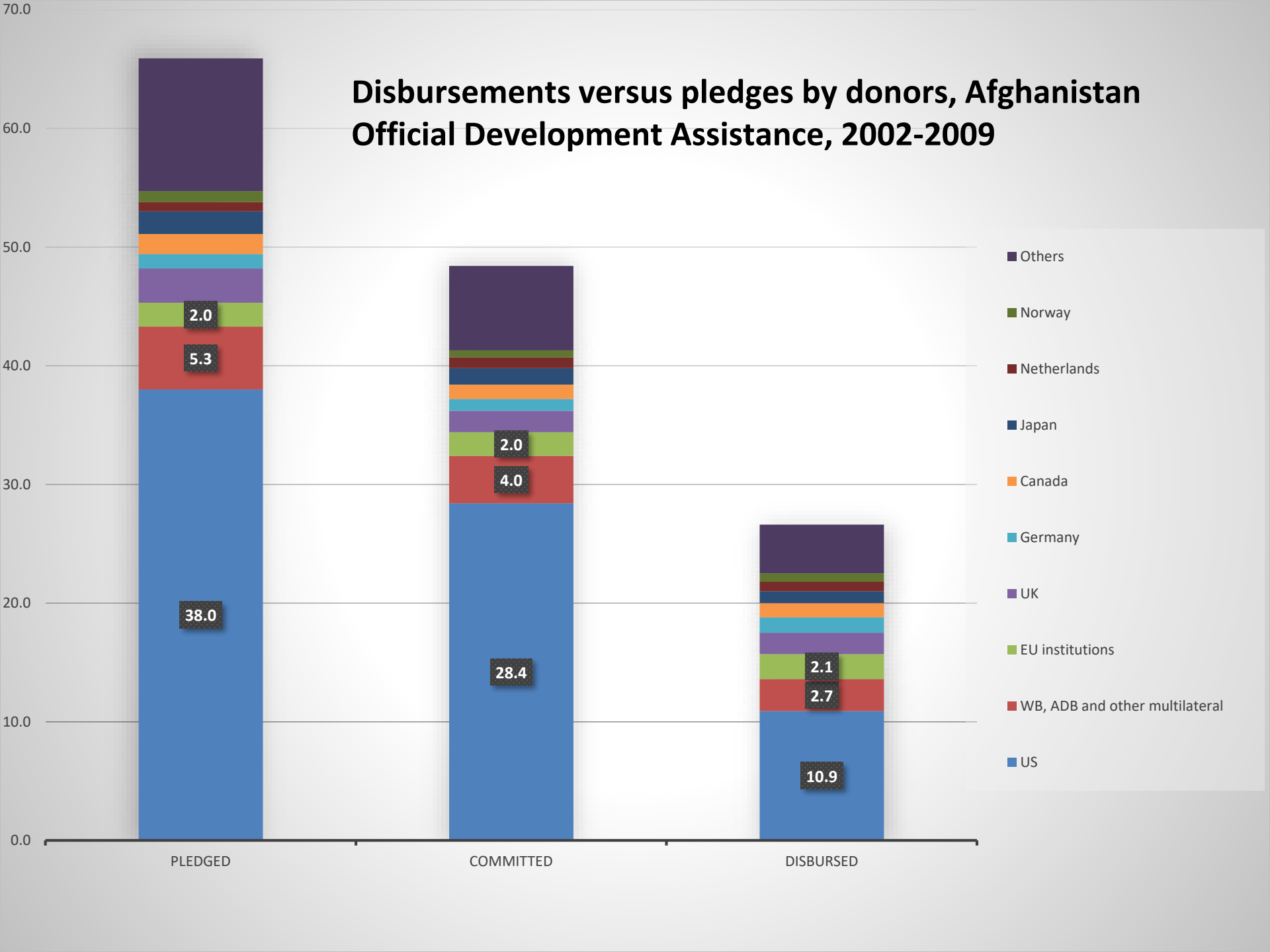
1 \$/day

Since 2006, on a conservative estimate, it has cost £15m a day to maintain Britain's military presence in Helmand province.

The equivalent of £25,000 has been spent for every one of Helmand's 1.5 million inhabitants, more than most of them will earn in a lifetime

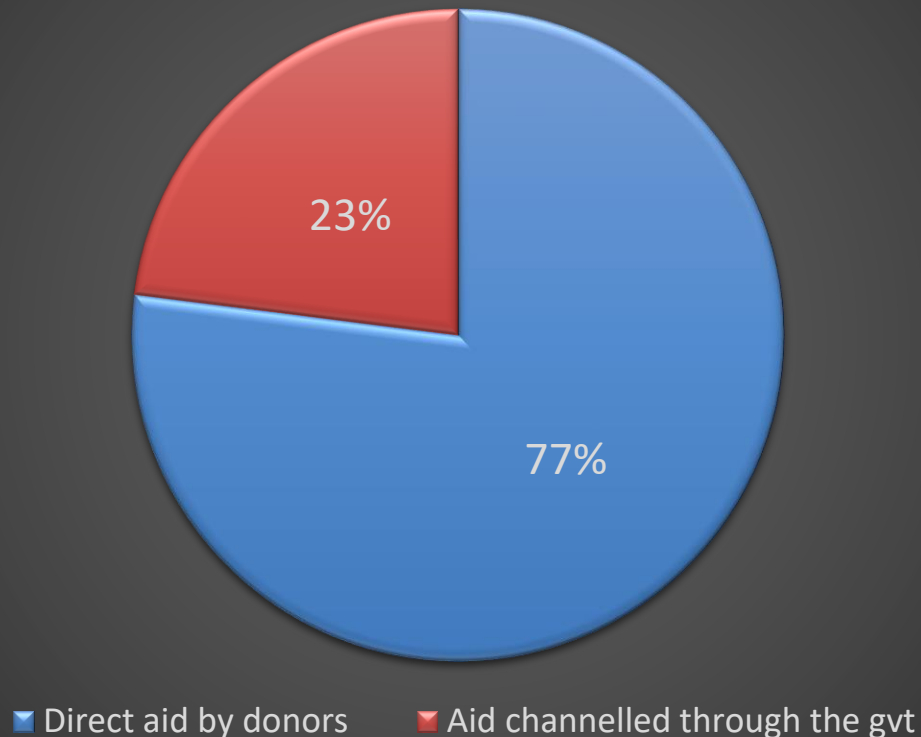
“By 2020, [Ledwidge] says, Britain will have spent at least £40bn on its Afghan campaign, enough to fund free tuition for all students in British higher education for 10 years.”

Disbursements versus pledges by donors, Afghanistan Official Development Assistance, 2002-2009



How much aid is channeled through the government?

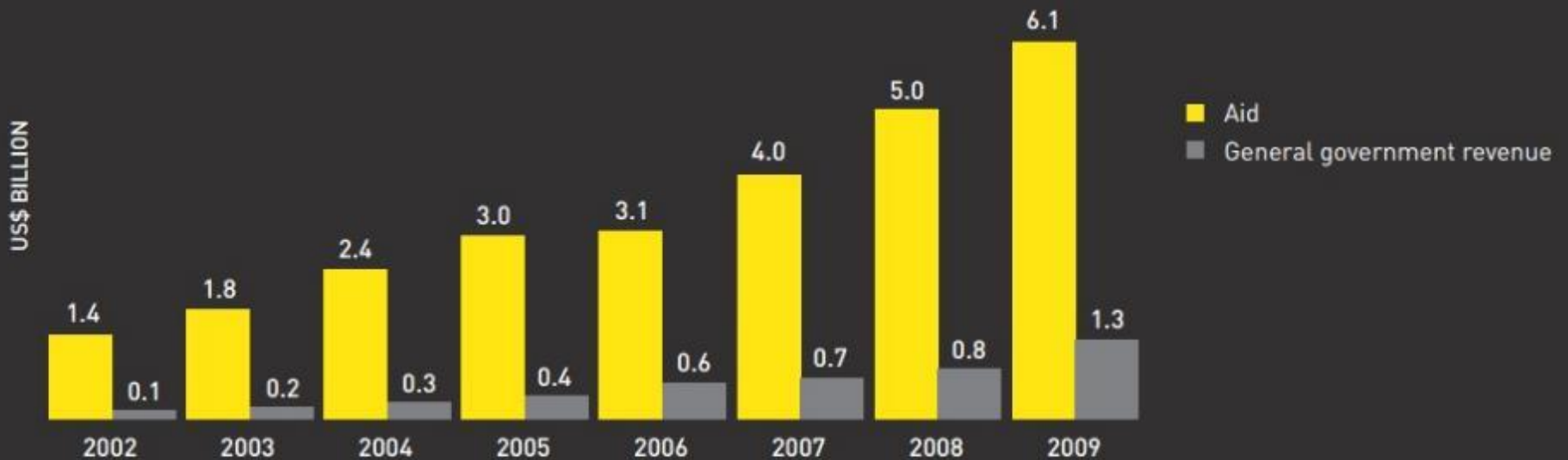
Distribution of Official Development Aid, 2002-2009



1. Direct aid (approx. 20 billion USD, 2002-2009): about 75% via foreign military actors (PRTs, ANA trust fund); rest through UN, international NGOs, ICRC... and about 0.1% to local NGOs and Civil Society Organizations
2. Aid through government (approx. 6 billion USD, 2002-2009): about 50% through trust funds where priorities are set by Afghan government, but which are managed by UNDP or The World Bank; other 50% to government programs or agencies

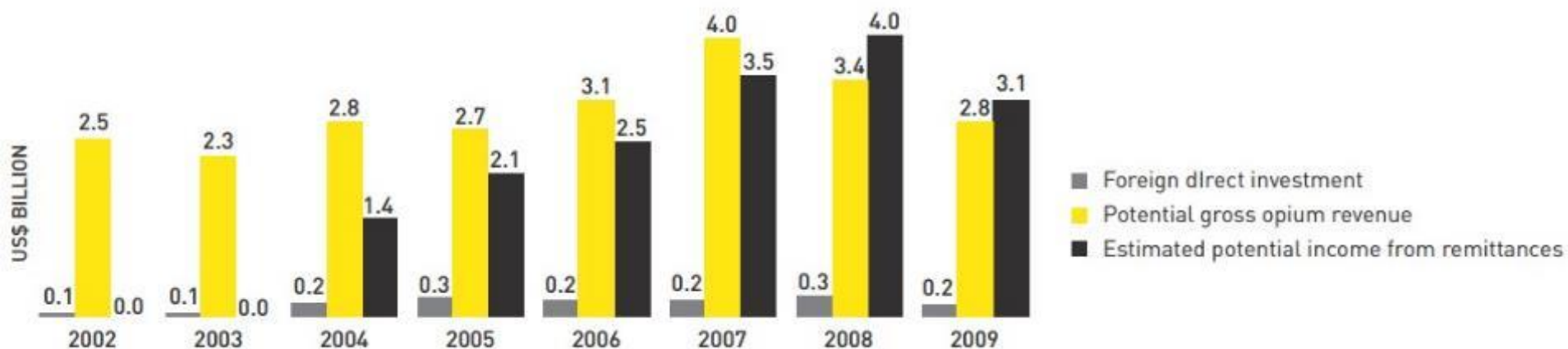
Government revenue vs ODA

FIGURE 25: GENERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND AID FLOWS, 2002-2009



Very little investment; private revenue flows mainly from opium trade and remittances

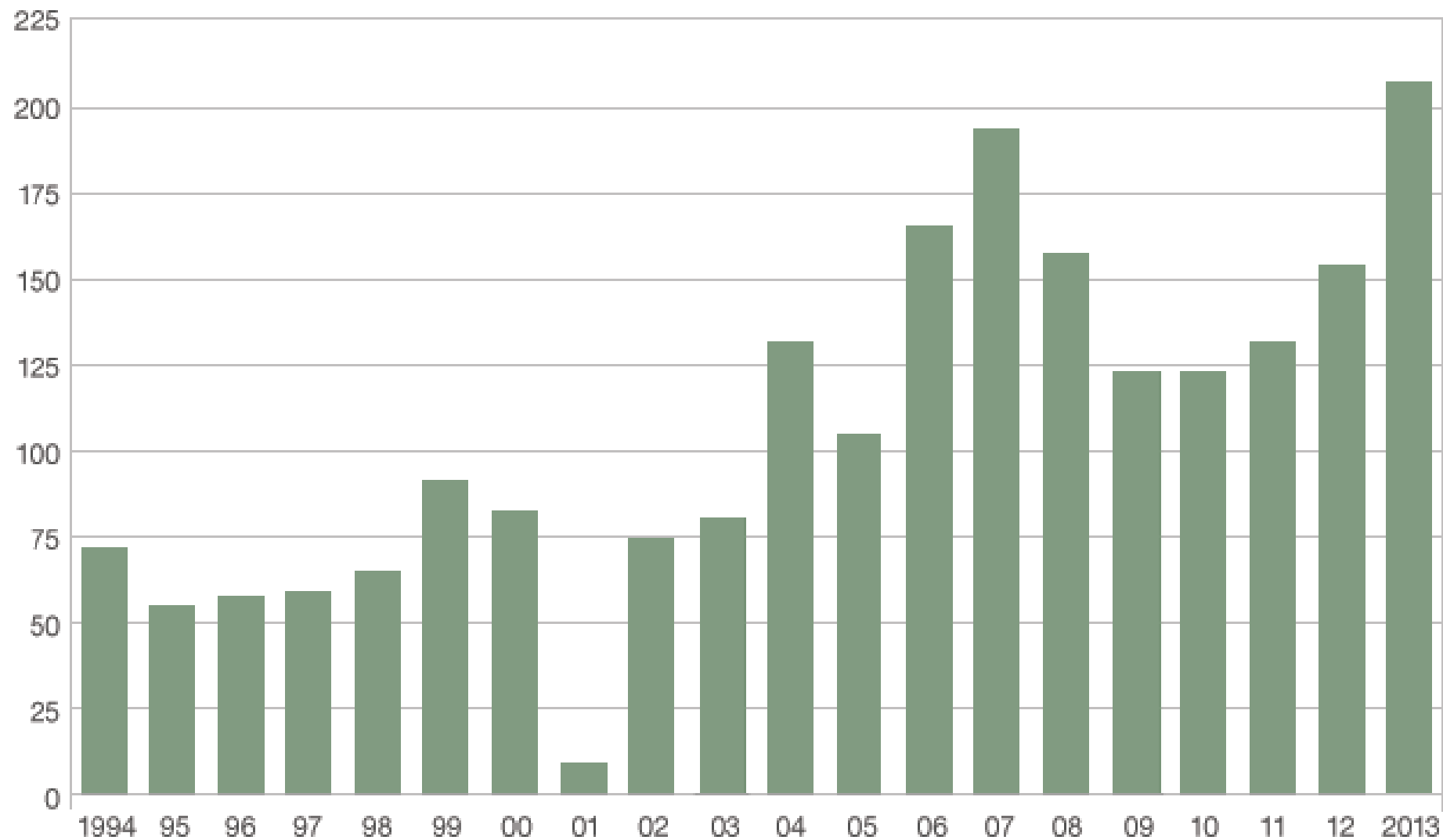
FIGURE 24: PRIVATE RESOURCE FLOWS, 2002-2009



Sources: Development Initiatives based on IMF; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data; and Development Initiatives research

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan, 1994-2013

Hectares (thousands)



Source: UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013


Notes about the cost of the intervention in Afghanistan and aid flows

1. Of approx. 1 trillion USD spent on the Afghan intervention since 2002, only about one percent was spent in Afghanistan
2. Of these 10 billion dollars, how much was meaningfully invested in Afghanistan? 10%? And in what?
 - a. Salaries
 - b. Roads, telecoms and other infrastructure
 - c. Support to agriculture, education, health, water and sanitation
 - d. Government institutions and processes such as capacity building, elections, constitution etc.
3. The aid flow has resulted in massive corruption; but only in Afghanistan? What about the other 99%?

Personal Impressions, 2000-2014

- *Despite misgivings, there is also hope, for my Afghan friends and their children*
- *Many prospects for rapid personal growth and development*
- *Cities growing: physical, social and cultural infrastructure improving*
- *Democratic political institutions gradually taking root*
- *Social inclusion, also of minorities*
- ***WE ARE WITNESSING CULTURAL CHANGE, PROBABLY LASTING***



A photograph of four military helicopters flying in a formation over a mountainous landscape. The helicopters are silhouetted against a clear sky. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a bright sky.

**Lessons (not) Learnt in
Afghanistan
Seminar 1**

**Ideological underpinnings of the
international intervention
in Afghanistan 1: Bonn (2001-2008)**

Shared expectations (West & Afghans)

Ending the civil war

Representative government

Strong and viable state

Good governance

Security & Rule of Law

Human rights

Reconstruction

Eradicating drugs



Leading up to the Bonn Agreement (Dec 2001)

- The international community had largely forgotten Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal (ended 1989)
- The UN had maintained a mission in the country throughout this period; Brahimi had been one of the SRSGs
- Taliban never recognized as legitimate gvt.
- Low-level negotiations with exiled or opposition groups, leading nowhere
- 9/11 catalyst
- 7 October – 14 November campaign to oust the Taliban
- Northern Alliance retook power in Kabul
- Complete unpreparedness of the international community, ad hoc diplomacy
- Brahimi report, criticizing UN interventions in Cambodia, East Timor and Kosovo published in 2000



**Brahimi Report vs current UN interventions:
Good subject for paper!*

Bonn Agreement (4 December 2001)

Preamble

1. Interim Authority, General Provisions
 2. Legal Framework and Judicial System
 3. Interim Administration
 - Composition
 - Procedures
 - Functions
 4. The Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga
 5. Final Provisions
 - Signature of 23 participants
- Annex 1: International Security Force
- Annex 2: Role of the UN during the Interim Period
- Annex 3: Request to the UN by the Participants at the UN Talks on Afghanistan
- Annex 4: Composition of the Interim Administration (Chairman, 5 vice-Chairmen, 24 Ministers)

Analysis of Bonn Agreement

Features

It was a surprise meeting; the goal of reaching a comprehensive settlement for Afghanistan was not announced (only 'talks')

It was therefore not ideally representative; last-minute exclusion of Afghan civil society representatives

It provided the beginning of a road map; details to be filled in by the results of the planned consultative processes (Loya Jirga, constitution, elections)

It was the first UN mission based on the Brahimi report, advocating a new approach

What was missing

Many subjects were left out, including a reconstruction plan, a democratization plan, how to provide security, a national reconciliation strategy, how to re-establish the Rule of Law...

Coordination with Operation Enduring Freedom