

“BREAD AND BOMBS”

An educational resource on War and Afghanistan for Post Primary teachers



C. Warner

TROCAIRE

The 11th of September, 2001 will be carved forever on the memory of many people all over the world. Most of us watched the TV images in horror and disbelief as the hijacked aircraft destroyed the Twin Towers and damaged the Pentagon. As the story unfolded the massive loss of innocent life became clear and the stories of rescue workers buried under the buildings added to the shock and horror felt by so many. The world literally came to a stop as we heard the stories of suffering and of heroism from the United States. The perpetrators of the attacks on the United States must be brought to justice. Impunity for human rights violators in any country is intolerable. However, in responding to global terrorism, all governments must ensure that international law is upheld, innocent people protected and hatred is not deepened.

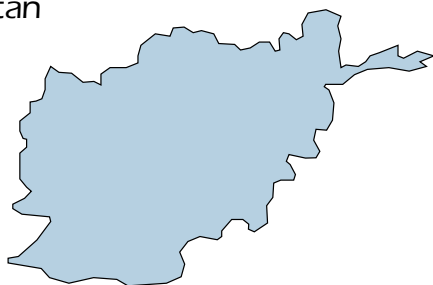
Before the events of September 11, Afghanistan was a place that rarely featured in broadcasts or in reports. That has now changed as we receive daily updates on a country that the world had forgotten for decades. What we have not received however, is a real look beyond the headlines and the propaganda. This short resource offers ways of taking such a look. In a country of such poverty, critical questions need to be asked about the suffering that the ordinary people of Afghanistan are now being asked to shoulder. There are vital ethical and moral issues that arise relating to war, peace, human rights and justice. This resource is a small attempt at giving educators the tools to critically explore some of these issues.

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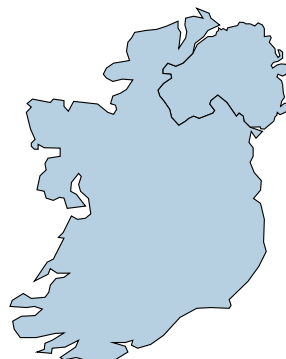
A SHORT COMPARISON

Afghanistan



Population: 26 million (4 million refugees)
 GDP per capita: \$700
 Access to safe water: 6 %
 Life expectancy: 45 (men); 46 (women)
 Infant mortality: 152 per 1,000 live births

Republic of Ireland



Population: 3.8 million
 GDP per capita: \$25,918
 Access to safe water: 100%
 Life expectancy: 73 (men); 79 (women)
 Infant mortality: 6 per 1,000 live births

Source: UNDP 2000

AFGHANISTAN.....

Capital: Kabul.

Area: 636,270 square km.

Population: 26 million.

Languages: Pushtu, Dari and English.

Ethnic groups: The Pushtuns form around half of the population and predominate in the south and west, the Tajiks, a Persian-speaking people, Uzbeks and Turkomans in the north, Hazaras in the centre and Baluchis in the southwest.

Religion: Islam. Most are Sunni Muslims and at least one million are Sh'ite Muslims.

Climate: Severe winter at higher altitudes, summers are warm throughout the mountainous country and very hot at lower levels. Rain in the spring, dry period between June and October. There has been severe drought for the past 3 years.

Currency: Afghani.

(Source: *The State of World's Population*).



TIME LINE

- 1933** Ruled by King Zahir Shah from 1933 until 1973, when the monarchy was overthrown in a bloodless coup. Mohammad Daoud, the king's cousin, becomes the country's first president, heading a moderate government.
- 1978** President Daoud killed in a coup led by Nur Mohammad Taraki. He in turn is deposed and killed the following year.
- 1979** Soviet invasion takes place. A bloody guerrilla war ensues, pitting Soviet and Afghan government troops against Western-backed rebel forces known as the Mujahideen. Despite the presence of some 115,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the rebels continue to control much of the countryside.
- 1989** Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev withdraws Soviet troops from Afghanistan after massive loss of life and widespread destruction of the country.
- 1992** Rival guerrilla groups fight for control of Kabul and President Rabbani emerges as victor.
- 1993** Continued fighting between factions leads to the deaths of over 10,000 civilians.
- 1994** Taliban Islamic militia emerge as a new force and begin to make gains all over Afghanistan.
- 1996** Taliban take over most of Afghanistan, including the ruined capital Kabul. The hardline movement, which wants to create the world's purest Islamic state, places restrictions on women's employment, travel and education, and enforces a strict dress code.
- 1998** The Taliban captures the opposition bastion of Mazar-i-Sharif to control 90% of Afghanistan.
- 1999** U.N. impose aviation and financial sanctions against the Taliban for failing to surrender Osama bin Laden for trial on charges of plotting the bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa the previous year.
- 2000** Clashes between the Taliban and forces led by Ahmad Shah Masood, the military chief of the Northern Alliance (opposition group) escalate. Hundreds of displaced people die at refugee camps at Herat, the western provincial capital, and the United Nations appeals for tents, blankets and warm clothing.
- 2001** **September** - A few days before the attacks in the United States, Masood was fatally wounded in an assassination attempt.
- 2001** **September 11th** - Hijacked passenger planes smash into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, killing thousands of people. The United States accuse Osama bin Laden of masterminding the attacks but bin Laden denies responsibility and the Taliban refuse demands from the United States to hand him over. Fearing a punishing attack by U.S. forces, tens of thousands of Afghans stream towards the Pakistani border. Aid agencies put emergency plans in place.
- 2001** **October 7th** - The first bombing attack is launched by the US on Afghan targets.



Introductory Activities

Activity 1

Invite students to answer the following questions -

- How many armed conflicts were happening in the world in the year 2000?
- How many countries in armed conflict can you name?

FACT

In the year 2000 there were 25* major armed conflicts in the world. All but two of these were internal conflicts (Colombia and Peru) and most occurred in Asia and Africa. Twelve of these conflicts caused over 1,000 battle-related deaths. But this is only part of the story. Most of the people who die in modern conflicts are civilians – predominantly women and children.

* The countries are: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea -Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan, Burma, India-Kashmir, India-Assam, India- Pakistan, Indonesia (Aceh), Philippines (Mindanao), Sri Lanka, Russia (Chechnya), Israel-Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Turkey.

FACT

In the same year (2000) total world military spending came to \$800 billion and the top 5 sellers of arms in the world were

1. United States (with almost half of total sales)
2. Russia
3. France
4. UK
5. Germany



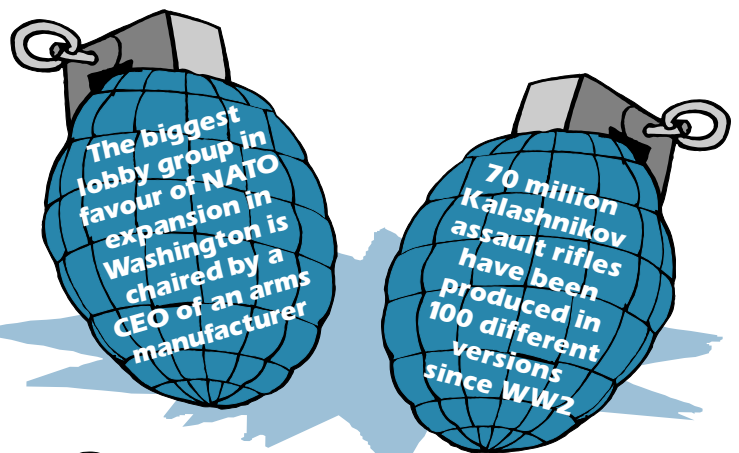
Activity 2

Ask the class to write down \$800 billion.

- How many noughts does it have? (11 is the answer) (800,000,000,000)
- Ask them to break it into understandable segments.

For example – A house in rural Ireland might cost \$100,000. How many houses could one buy with \$800 billion (Answer – 8 million houses and there are only 1.4 million houses in Ireland).

A new car might cost \$15,000. How many cars could I get for \$800 billion? (Just over 53 million).



Activity 3

Copy the table below and distribute amongst the students.

- Are these figures surprising or shocking?
- Who makes the choices here?
- Why do we spend more on war than on peace?
- What does this say about the world that we live in?

War versus Poverty

The \$800 billion spent in the year 2000 on the arms industry could have tackled some of the greatest needs of our world.

- Providing basic health care to those currently without – \$15 billion per annum.
- Providing shelter to those without it - \$21 billion per annum.
- Provide literacy for all – \$5 billion per annum.
- Eliminate starvation and malnourishment - \$19 billion per annum.
- Prevent global warming - \$8 billion per annum.
- Provide safe clean water for all - \$50 billion per annum.
- Total cost - \$118 billion per annum.

Activity 4 – War and Poverty

Divide the class into 5 groups. Give each group a fact card (below) and invite them to present the facts on their card in a creative way. This could be through role play, a mime, a drawing, a cartoon, song, etc. Give the groups about 15 minutes before asking them to report back to the whole class. Follow up by asking the students to talk about what they have seen presented. What did they learn about the link between global poverty and war? Why are governments spending so much on arms and warfare when people are hungry? Conclude by discussing the following –

“Wouldn't it be nice if hospitals and schools had all they needed and the army had to hold jumble sales to buy guns”.

FACT CARDS

Every year, right across the world, £12,900 is spent on training each soldier while only £253 is spent on education for each child.

The total amount of money collected by Live Aid for Africa was £33 million. Global spending on the arms trade is £33 million every 20 minutes.

The cost of one Trident submarine is the same as the cost of a year's schooling for 16 million children in the developing world.

The cost of one missile could plant 200 million trees

There are about twice as many people in the military as there are doctors, nurses and teachers in the world.

Source: ASrI

When is a War JUST?

For almost two thousand years the question of when Christians should go to war has been hotly debated. Since the taking of human life is so seriously opposed to Gospel values, warfare has always presented a serious moral dilemma. In the middle ages St Thomas Aquinas developed the “Just War Theory” not to justify war but to limit its scope and methods.



The criteria set out for the just war include -

1. The cause must be just.
2. It must be undertaken by a legitimate authority.
3. The intention must be right.
4. It must be a last resort.
5. There must be a declaration of war.
6. There must be reasonable hope of success.
7. The good that it hopes to achieve must outweigh the evil produced (the criteria of proportionality).
8. Non-combatants must be immune from attack.

Use the above criteria as the basis for classroom discussion on the morality of war in Afghanistan. Pope John Paul II has said “*Today the horror and scale of modern warfare makes it totally unacceptable as a means of settling differences*”.

Do you agree?



To WAR or not to WAR?

The following are quotes from US President George W. Bush and Richard Goldstone, the chief prosecutor of the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda

‘We are at war’ *President George W. Bush.*

‘Terrorists can be brought to justice only by legal means’

Richard Goldstone

‘We will take the actions necessary to no longer harbour terrorists – whatever form that takes’

President Bush

‘If the Western powers are to bring the perpetrators of the 11 September outrage to justice under international law, then they must respect that law in their own actions. It would be tragic if, after coming so far in the application of law to international crimes, they were to throw it away by outlaw actions themselves’.

Richard Goldstone

‘Wanted Dead or Alive’ – *President Bush referring to Osama bin Laden.*

‘Anger and cries for revenge, no matter how provoked, do not justify unlawful retaliation. To act contrary to the law is to signal defeat at the hands of terrorists. That is precisely the reaction that they seek to provoke’.

Richard Goldstone

Activity

Ask for 2 volunteers to read out the statements alternatively for the whole class. Then ask the class to decide who makes the most sense? Discuss other examples of criminal or terrorist activity? What kinds of responses are best in dealing with this? What are the advantages and disadvantages of seeking justice through the due process of the law? Think about the case of Slobodan Milosovic who is now on trial for war crimes, or Rwanda where an International Court is now trying people accused of genocide.

The First Casualty of War - TRUTH

MEDIA IMAGES AND HEADLINES

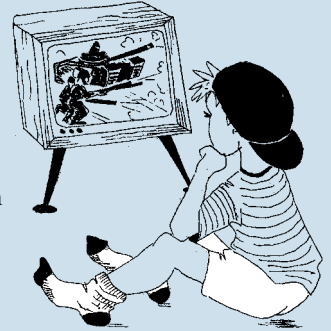
AIM – To look at the role of the media in the reporting of the Afghan War.

NEEDED – Newspaper headline clippings from a series of papers, (or a copy of page 7) blue-tac, some wall space.

ACTIVITY – Place the headlines and images around the wall, creating a gallery effect. Ensure that the headlines and images come from a selection of newspapers, both tabloid and broadsheet. Ask the students to take 5 minutes in silence to just walk around the room and look at each headline and image.

UNPACKING –

- What feelings do these images and headlines arouse?
- What do you notice about the language used? What is the tone - factual or sensational? Is hate language used? What about language of good and evil? What might be the impact of this on our attitudes?
- Is the media our sole source of information on what is happening? How powerful is the role of the media in influencing how we see this situation? Where does the media get its information?
- Which headlines are fact and which are opinion?
- Are there differences on how the situation is being reported in different papers? What are they? Why do you think these differences might exist?



A PRESS BRIEFING

AIM – To develop an understanding of the various interests and perspectives involved in media reporting.

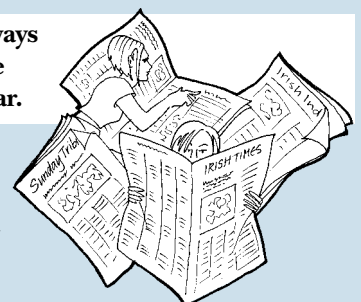
NEEDED – The Press Briefing cards, pens and paper.

ACTIVITY – Divide the class into 5 groups. Each group receive one of the Press Briefings cards. The group are then given 5 minutes to write a short 10 line Press Report on the current situation in Afghanistan. Their report should be a response to what is currently happening in Afghanistan so it may be necessary to give a short briefing of what the up to date situation actually is (This can be done by taking a number of daily newspapers and summarising the main stories). Another option is to create a hypothetical situation. E.g. Such and such has just happened in Afghanistan and you are required to make an immediate response.

When the reports are completed each group should choose one speaker to read it to the whole class. The speaker should not say who they are but should rather allow the rest of the class to guess his/her identity.

1. I am the leader of the Islamic Community in Ireland. I am totally opposed to violence in all its forms and believe that a peaceful solution can be found to the problems that exist in the world. I am also very nervous about the safety of Muslim people in Ireland because of all the negative images in the media.
2. I am a local aid worker based in Kabul. Before the bombings started we were working to feed those who have been severely hit by the recent food shortages throughout the country. Now our work is even more difficult. People are fleeing for their lives and have no food or medicines.
3. I work for The National Security Council in Washington. It is our job to draw up the US Response to the current situation and to relay that response to the American people. We must always make sure that the American public feel secure and know that we will bring the terrorists to justice.
4. I am Brian Cowen, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am in a difficult position. On the one hand I feel it is important to protect Ireland's neutrality and on the other hand America is our friend and we must be seen to support the US government.
5. I am the spokesperson for the Pope. We believe that the taking of innocent life is always wrong and we must try to find other ways to resolve disputes between nations. We are particularly concerned for the many innocent Afghanis who will be affected by the war.

UNPACKING – Ask the students their reactions to the different Press Briefings. Were they able to guess who might be writing the various reports? What does this exercise show about people's different vested interests and perspectives? Are the press reports that we read 'fact' or loaded with different agendas? What does it say about the necessity of critical thinking in reading the newspapers?



**Bin Laden broadcasts
message of contempt**

Irish Independent

**Fight
for
freedom**

Irish Times

**Civil War Looms
as riot mobs go
on the rampage**

The Star

**New
incidents
in US add
to anthrax
scare**

The Irish Times

A people with no home

The Sunday Tribune

**Burning Hatred
spills on to the
streets of Pakistan**

The Irish Independent

**The devil
comes in
many guises**

The Irish Examiner

**Taliban Pledge
Revenge**

Evening Herald

**Let there be no
doubt, the slaughter
has only started**

The Irish Independent

New York hails 'payback time'

Evening Herald

Perilous journey to flee social chaos, Refugees say Afghanistan coming apart, Taliban coercing youth into their militia

Colin Nickerson, *Boston Globe*, Saturday, October 6, 2001

NEAR KHYBER PASS, PAKISTAN — Guided by smugglers, harried by thieves, half-crazy with dehydration and fear, they stumble down from the mountains with their most precious belongings lashed to their backs — an intricately carved baby's cradle, a set of carpenter's tools, a wedding shawl wrapped in stained muslin.

As they flee a war not yet begun, the latest throng of refugees from Afghanistan also carry descriptions of a country rapidly unravelling at the seams. They speak of forced conscriptions by the Taliban militia, of looting and lawlessness and of Kabul, Kandahar and other urban centres turning into ghost cities as tens of thousands of people strike out in search of sanctuary.

They also say food is in desperately short supply as drought has once again ruined the harvest and the flow of international aid has nearly ceased as the impoverished nation, already shattered by more than two decades of warfare, plunges into social chaos.

"People are running in all directions, some to the Pakistan border, some to their home villages. The streets are empty and in the markets there is hardly any food at any price," said Zahra Bayat, 54, a teacher from the ancient city of Ghazni, who last week traded a ring and bracelet inherited from her grandmother for a donkey, food, and enough money to pay smugglers to guide her family of six through the daunting mountain routes to Pakistan.

"The only law left in Afghanistan is the law of the mighty, the men with the guns," she said. "No one knows what is coming. People are so frightened."

Marika Amarkel, 33, lost her husband to the savage civil strife that followed the rout of Soviet occupation forces from Afghanistan in 1989. Her own arms and midsection bear the cruel stipple of shrapnel, wounds received in the cross fire between Taliban and rival guerrillas shortly before the Islamic fundamentalists shot their way to power in 1996. Through the years of horror, however, she remained in the family's home in the capital city of Kabul.

She finally fled last week, driven partly by fear of American missiles or bombs but mostly by the grim determination not to see her three sons, ages 9, 11, and 14, sacrificed on the altar of religious fanaticism. Every mother in Afghanistan, she asserted, is appalled by the youthful "army of martyrs" being raised by the Taliban to repel a possible American military invasion.

"The Taliban is going to the schools, demanding that young boys become fighters for their jihad," Amarkel said, using the Arabic word for holy war. "They are taking 10- or 11-year-olds..."

In Kabul, she said, entire neighbourhoods are emptying as women scoop up their young and as families pawn their possessions to finance a getaway. "People are abandoning their houses and furniture. They turn the

lock and turn their back on their lives in hope of keeping their lives."

It was standing room only on the back of the flatbed truck on which she was able to buy precious space for herself and the boys. The passage to the border took several harrowing days because of mechanical breakdowns. Food was scarce, with only a few ladlefuls of water and two loaves of bread procured from villagers along the way.

"But we were fortunate to find transportation. So many people are walking," she said. "Some are giving up and just sitting or lying (along the roads), too exhausted to move, shivering even in the sun."

At the Afghan Women's Clinic outside Peshawar, the Director said new arrivals are often malnourished but not starving. But many become dangerously dehydrated during the passage, she said, and there are reports, impossible to independently confirm, of dozens of people perishing of thirst or murdered by thieves along the smuggling routes.

Hundreds are already slipping illegally into Pakistan every day. The passage is perilous. Ghulam Hasi, 40, and his family of eight were abandoned by their escort of smuggler-guides, then ambushed by thieves as they stumbled toward the border village of Ali Masjid three nights ago.

"We had walked 10 days from Kabul. All we had were my carpentry tools, four blankets, and my wife's wedding shawl, intended for our daughter," said Hasi. "The tribesmen fell upon us with their knives, taking everything."

Hasi said he was driven to flee Afghanistan mainly by fear of a war but also by deteriorating economic conditions. In recent months, food has become so costly that his family routinely went to bed with stomachs growling. "I have forgotten the sight of a whole potato," he said.

The soft-spoken builder, wearing a white skullcap, described himself as an extremely devout Muslim but also said he has come to disdain the Taliban.

"All they know is to order men into mosques or whip a poor woman who accidentally shows her face or foot (in public)," he said. "They made us take our daughter from school, calling it a sin for girls to read. They want to drag our society back to the Dark Ages."



Activity 1

Human Rights - another casualty of war

AIM – to understand the range of human rights that are threatened or violated in times of war.

NEEDED – Copies of newspaper article (page 8) and copies of the UNHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and/or the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ACTIVITY – As a class read the article from the Boston Globe. Then invite the students to form small groups and re-read the article, this time taking note of all the human rights that are violated or threatened by the terrible situation described. To help in this exercise it may be useful to have a summary of the UDHR for each group. Alternatively this exercise can be done from the perspective of the children, and students can identify which children's rights are being violated. A summary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child would be useful to help in this exercise.

Follow on from this exercise by drawing a list on the blackboard of

Rights denied Rights threatened Rights protected

Activity 2 - Building a Better Future.

AIM – To help students understand how the cycle of violence can be broken.

NEEDED – Copies of the article on page 10.

ACTIVITY – Distribute copies of the article entitled “An Education in Peace”.

Discuss -

- What are the key things that make this school different from most schools in Afghanistan?
- Why did the school feel it was important to remove corporal punishment?
- Do you agree that “taking violence out of education” can help in building a more peaceful society? How? What is the link?
- “If children live with aggression they learn to be violent” – Discuss.
- How important is education in building a better future?

AN EDUCATION IN PEACE

By Caroline Lynch,

Trócaire's Communications Officer, from Peshawar in Northern Pakistan.

FARKHONDA HAYAGI is just like any 12 year old. She dreams of the future and disagrees with her mother. What makes her unlike most 12-year-olds is the fact that she is an Afghan refugee and lives in a town in Pakistan, which is less than 100 miles from the border with her homeland..

When Farkhonda looks to the future, she sees herself as a glamorous Air Stewardess. Her mother has other ideas for her daughter who is top of her Grade Five class in the Sadia Primary School in Peshawar in the north of Pakistan.

"I want to be a flight attendant. My mother says you should become a doctor," she explains. Shrugging her shoulders, she protests: "I don't want to be a doctor. It's very dangerous. And I'm also afraid of blood." Her predicament makes her 20 classmates including nine girls, laugh.

Raz Dalili of the Trócaire funded partner agency, the Sanayee Institute for Education and Learning (SIEAL), which set up the school also joins in the laughter. But he also picks up on one point and whispers: "Afghans have seen a lot of blood."

Indeed, some 24,000 people lost their lives in one Afghan province in one day during the country's 20 years of occupation and civil conflict.

Farkhonda has been living in Peshawar since 1994. She was only four when she and her parents and four sisters fled their country in search of security.

Now she is one of 450 students attending the Sadia Primary School, which teaches children from Grade one to six (children aged from six to 12 years.) There is a strong focus on learning English – "it's an important international language" - as well as peace studies.

SIEAL has pioneered a different approach to teaching in Afghan schools. Instead of allowing corporal punishment, the participatory method is promoted. This means no beating of children and students and teachers discuss problems as they arise.

The programme started in 1999 with the aim of taking violence out of Afghan education and therefore prepare for a peaceful Afghan society.

SIEAL's Director, Raz Dalili, explained: "In Afghanistan, all children know about is violence because most children have grown up in a war situation. They do not know how to deal with each other peacefully. We want Peace to be part of the curriculum of the Afghan education system in the future."

He went on: "Violence is present in every society. The degree of violence differs from society to society. Afghanistan has been a war-torn country for so long, a

culture of violence has become a way of life for people and children. It is crucial to work towards a change of attitude and behaviour and help children to leave behind their war mentality which they have learned from their environment and family."

A mistake committed by some short-sighted aid agencies was to include the language of war in textbooks prepared for children attending their schools. A Maths lesson would ask the children to solve the question: if my brother killed 20 Russians and my cousin killed 20 Russians, how many Russian soldiers would be killed?

While these textbooks are still used in some schools today, SIEAL has rejected this militarisation of the school curriculum. They say "it's back to counting apples" - and their approach is already reaping rewards.

Mr Dalili continued: "Whenever we have started the subject it has changed the attitudes of students. One Principal told us that before many chairs and tables were broken by students. Then they changed their approach and since then no chairs or tables have been broken by the students."

Parents have also reported that their children have intervened in family rows and asked the parents to be reasonable with each other – even mediating between their warring mother and father.

"A school should be a more interesting place for students than their homes. Before the children were crying because they didn't want to come to school. After two months of going to school with the peace approach, the children were crying because they didn't want to return home."

The peace message is getting through to the Afghan school children of Peshawar.

Asked about violence, Farkhonda responded: "We long for peace. We should be friends with everyone and we should have good manners with them. But the first step is starting from here - we start from school and then in society. We should solve problems by sitting together and solving our differences together."



A text book showing children how to count by using guns and bullets

The Human Cost of War

Wars are complex events. When they take place a variety of outcomes occur. This section focuses on the outcomes for the innocent civilians who most often suffer the consequences of conflict and war.

Activity Ask the class to imagine what the conflict in Afghanistan is causing for the ordinary people who live in the country. Then do a brainstorm on the blackboard.

Here are a few tips....

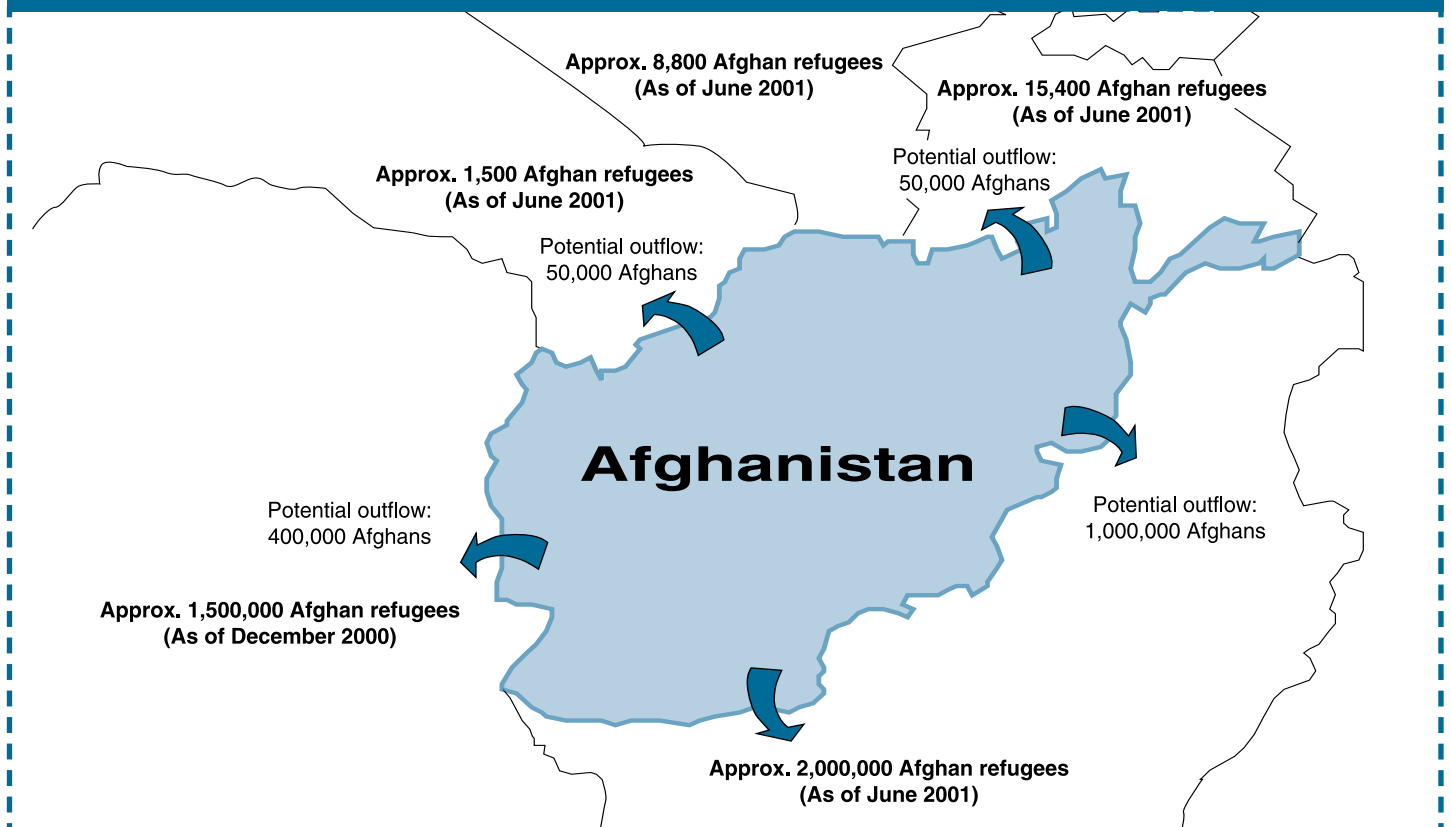
- Crops, land and environment are destroyed.
- Destruction of food stores, shops and property.
- Inflation increases dramatically at times of conflict leading to poverty for most of the population.
- People are forced to flee and become refugees or internally displaced.
- Much trade and small business ceases.
- Governments stop spending on social needs and divert funds to military hardware.
- Roads and means of travel are often dangerous.
- It can be difficult to get access for emergency relief.
- Young people are forced to become soldiers.

TASK Discuss these points in reference to the current situation in Afghanistan. Discuss the long-term impacts for the people of Afghanistan even when the conflict ceases. For example: If no crops are planted this year, what will next year hold? What will the future hold for the many refugees who flee the conflict? What are the long-term implications when children are used in war?

IMAGINE -

If all the military mindpower and money that is being spent on the war was spent instead on finding other non-violent solutions, what might be possible? The first night of bombing alone is reported to have cost \$50 million. The war against Iraq in 1991 cost the coalition forces \$70 billion, not counting the cost of rebuilding Iraq, estimated at \$10 billion.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN NEIGHBOURING



What's **Religion** got to do with it?

Much media reporting highlights the extremist and negative images of 'Islam'. There has been little comment on what 'Islam' actually is and what it teaches.

The word 'Islam' comes from an Arabic word meaning 'Peace'. This peace is based on submission to Allah – the word that Muslims use for God. Muslims believe that Muhammad was the greatest of the Muslim prophets and he received the holy book of Islam, the Qur'an*, from the Angel Gabriel.

The Qur'an gives guidance to Muslims on every aspect of their faith.

Activity

Read out the 6 enclosed quotes. Announce that 3 come from the Christian Bible, 2 from the Qur'an and 1 from the teachings of Buddhism. Ask the class to decide which quotes come from which religion.

Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors. *(Sura 2.187 The Qur'an)*

Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children. *(Matthew 5:9)*

Though one conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, he who conquers himself is the greatest warrior. Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love. This is the eternal law. *(The teachings of Buddha)*

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap you on the left cheek too." *(Matthew 5: 38-39)*

If they seek peace, then you should seek peace. And trust in God for he is the one that hears and knows all things. *(Sura 8:61 The Qur'an)*

And they beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." *(Isaiah 2:4)*

**Note: While we might be more familiar with the western spelling – Koran, the preferred spelling amongst muslims is Qur'an.*

DISCUSS:

How do these quotes from the different religions relate to what has been happening recently in Afghanistan? What do the quotes tell us about Islam and Buddhism? What do they tell us about Christianity?

How can they help us in responding to the crisis in our world today?

ACTION

- Carry out a media survey of the war coverage.
- Carry out survey of student's attitudes - re support for the bombing, etc. Help the students to design the survey questions and agree the best way of analysing the results.
- Organise a peace vigil or peace petition.
- Invite a speaker from the Muslim community (or a student from the Muslim faith) to talk to the class about their beliefs and current fears and hopes.

For information, educational materials or to arrange a school visit contact Dr. Ali Qirbi, Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, 19 Roebuck Road, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. **01 208 0000**.

- Invite a speaker to the class from an agency dealing with the humanitarian impact of the crisis.
- Organise a debate on the morality of war, (if you are in the Republic of Ireland, your local Fianna Fail TD might give the government's perspective while a member of the Green party or an aid agency might give a different perspective). A representative from the US Embassy could be invited to give the US governments position.
- Write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or Foreign Secretary) regarding Ireland's (or the UK's) role (See guidelines on next page).
- Support the people of Afghanistan through fundraising. To support Trócaire's Afghanistan Appeal Phone Callsave **1850 408 408** in the Republic of Ireland, and **028 9080 8030** in Northern Ireland. It is also possible to donate online at www.trocaire.org

At this unpredictable time, we must think of the massive suffering of the people of Afghanistan. For more than 20 years they have endured war. Hundreds of thousands have died. Four million people have fled their homes. Their cities and towns lie in ruins. Exhausted by the struggle to survive the war, many have been unable to cope with the three-year drought. More than five million Afghans - a figure larger than the population of Ireland - are in need of food aid and thousands of people have already perished.

Trócaire has worked in Afghanistan since 1992. Through a local partner, SIEAL, Trócaire is currently delivering food aid, tents, clothing and medicines to those affected by the current war in Afghanistan and to Afghans living in refugee camps in Pakistan. This is essential in the short term, but much work will need to be done for the many people whose lives will be under threat in the long term. There must be a genuine, serious and publicly stated long-term commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan and helping refugees to eventually return home.

Campaign for peace and justice

The world's governments must ensure that in responding to global terrorism international law is upheld and innocent people are protected.

The UN has agreed several laws - called Conventions - which state how terrorism should be tackled. All UN member countries should sign these Conventions and ratify them. This means that they accept that the Conventions are international laws and agree to be bound by those rules.

Under UN law, the US has a right to self-defence. However, it can only use military force if:

- It is necessary to do so in order to protect itself from a threat;
- The military response is in proportion to the threat;
- The other UN members agree that both above conditions have been met.

A military response is illegal under UN law if it directly affects civilians or if it has an impact on civilians which is out of proportion to the threat of attack.

In Afghanistan, millions of people risk severe illness, long-lasting poverty or even death because they are fleeing their homes due to the US military attack on Afghanistan.



The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has pointed out that "the United Nations has already in place conventions that provide the necessary legal framework for many of the steps to eradicate terrorism".

THESE CONVENTIONS INCLUDE:

The International Convention on the Taking of Hostages

The International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist bombings

The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism

The Convention on the Statutory Limitations to War Crimes.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The Declaration recognising the International Court of Justice

None of the above conventions has been ratified by Ireland, while the UK has ratified all of them. Both the UK & Ireland are members of the 15-member UN Security Council. This is the chief decision-making body of the UN on resolving conflict.

The people suspected of the attacks in the US should be brought before a fair and independent international court. It is very important that all people worldwide see that justice is being done in a fair manner. The international community created conventions so that violence would not be used to settle scores between countries.

It is now time to halt the violence and to use the international legal mechanisms to bring terrorists to justice.

Ireland and the UK should work at the UN Security Council to halt the military attacks and to persuade the UN members to use agreed international law to track down and to charge the suspected terrorists.

TAKE ACTION:

Please write to or email the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Brian Cowen TD (if you are in the Republic of Ireland) or (if you are in Northern Ireland) Foreign Secretary Jack Straw MP.

Urge them to:

Insist that the UN Security Council that the people who carried out the 11th September attack be brought to justice using international law, leading to a fair trial, rather than using military acts;

Ensure that Afghan civilians are protected from violence, hunger, cold and disease and are supported, both in the present and in the long-term when they return to rebuild their country;

*Brian Cowen TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Email: brian.cowen@iveagh.irlgov.ie or
dfa@iveagh.irlgov.ie*

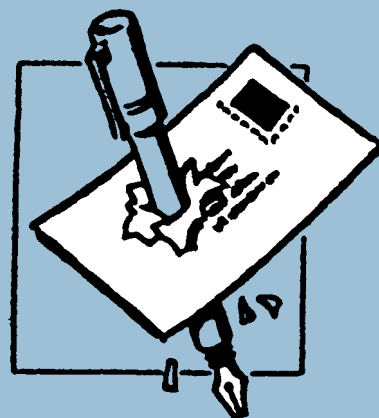
*Rt. Hon. Jack Straw M.P.
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street,
London SW1A 2AH.
Fax: 020 7839 2417
Info@new.labour.org.uk or Sead.fco@gtnet.gov.uk*

- 2.** You can also email Ireland's or the UK's representative at

The UN Security Council:

*Ireland:
Ambassador
Richard Ryan:
irlun@undp.org*

*UK: Ambassador
Jeremy Greenstock:
uk@un.int*



Thoughts and Prayers for Peace

If a child lives with criticism,
she learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
she learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
she learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
she learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
he learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
she learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and
friendship,
she learns to find love in the world.

—Dorothy Law Nolte

You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.

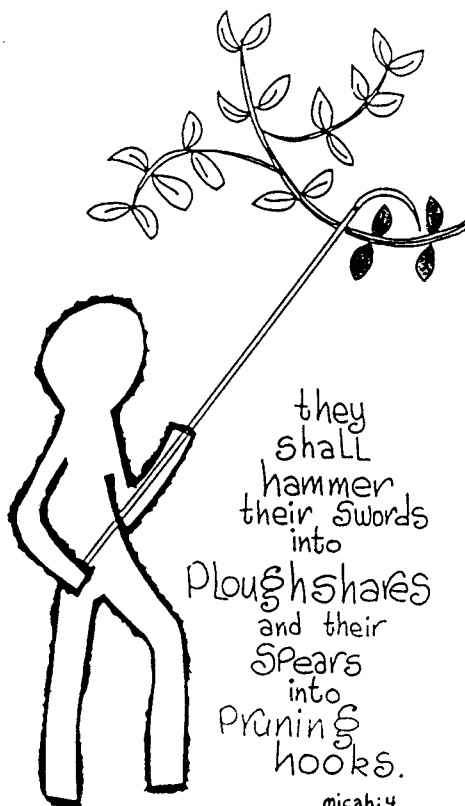
Indira Gandhi, 1971

Lead us from death to life,
From falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope,
From fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love,
From war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts,
Our world, our universe.
Let us dream together,
Pray together,
Work together,
To build one world
Of peace and justice
for all.

Prayer for Peace

Goodness is stronger than evil,
Love is stronger than hate,
Light is stronger than darkness,
Life is stronger than death.

Desmond Tutu.



Deep peace of the running wave to you;
Deep peace of the flowing air to you;
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you;
Deep peace of the shining stars to you;
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

Celtic blessing, Celebrating Together (Corrymeela Press 1987)



169 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 53 85 Fax: (01) 2883577
e-mail: info@trocaire.ie

12 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1.
Tel/Fax 01 8743875
e-mail: info@cs.trocaire.org

Written by: Séan Farrell / Annette Honan

50 King Street, Belfast BT1 6AD Tel. 028 90 808030
Fax: 028 90 808031 e-mail: info@bl.trocaire.org
(From ROI: Tel: 048 90 808030 Fax: 048 90 808031)

9 Cook Street, Cork, Tel: (021) 4275622
Fax: (021) 4271874
e-mail: info@ck.trocaire.org

Photo: Reuters

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