

Afghanistan aid program broken, group says

by UPI

KABUL, Afghanistan - Reliance on foreign donations by war-torn Afghanistan hobbles a government that depends on aid for 90 percent of its public spending, a relief group says. The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, an umbrella organization representing 95 aid groups offering assistance to Afghanistan, said in a statement Tuesday how the aid is spent affects the lives of Afghans and the viability of the central government in Kabul. The group said military spending far exceeds aid, with the U.S. military spending about \$100 million a day compared to the \$7 million per day in aid. In general, the group says there is an aid shortfall of \$10 billion and 40 percent of the aid revenue is returned to donor countries as corporate profits or goes for salaries. The agency said Afghanistan made great progress in healthcare, security and democratic institutions since 2001 but "most Afghans still endure conditions of hardship and millions live in extreme poverty." Though the use of provincial reconstruction teams is key to reconstruction in the less secure areas of the country, they have "undermined the emergence" of effective institutions in local and central Afghan ministries, the group said. The report recommends the adoption of a program that more evenly distributes foreign aid in a transparent manner.

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