



# News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

## American “Angels of Mercy” Return to Pakistan

*Islamabad, October 4, 2006* - Marking the first anniversary of the October 8, 2005 earthquake that devastated northern Pakistan, several CH-47 Chinook aircraft have returned to Pakistan (October 3, 2006). In coordination with the Pakistani Armed Forces and ERRA, the Chinooks will be in Pakistan over the next week to help deliver reconstruction material, including up to 10,000 corrugated iron sheets, for individual homes in remote parts of the Allai and Khagan Valleys.

Last year, the first CH-47 Chinooks arrived from Afghanistan within 48 hours of the earthquake, leading the immediate response of the United States and the international community. At the height of disaster relief operations, the U.S. Army provided 21 CH-47s. They delivered 14,000 tons of relief supplies and evacuated more than 3,000 casualties. Due to their fast and effective response, many people in the affected areas came to call the Chinooks “Angels of Mercy.” At its conclusion in March 2006, the total U.S. military effort in relief assistance was longer and larger than any other such effort undertaken by the U.S. military since the Berlin Airlift.

When President Bush and President Musharraf met at the White House on September 22, they reviewed the earthquake recovery effort and the human cost of the earthquake to the people of Pakistan. “The United States was proud to support Pakistan,” President Bush said, “because when we see people suffering, we care.” Many members of the Chinook flight and maintenance crews who flew earthquake relief missions last year have returned with the Chinooks for these reconstruction support missions, further demonstrating American commitment and concern for others.

The Chinooks are a symbol of hope and of the continuing commitment of the United States to help Pakistanis recover from this natural disaster. The U.S. has continued its effort as Pakistan’s needs have shifted from disaster relief to reconstruction. The United States, through USAID, has pledged \$206 million over the next four years in earthquake reconstruction assistance to Pakistan. This is in addition to \$1.5 billion program that USAID will provide in Pakistan over the next five years to improve education, health, governance and economic growth.

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