



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

American Chinooks Complete Week of Deliveries of Reconstruction Materials to Villages in Earthquake Zone

Islamabad, October 12, 2006 - Three American Chinook helicopters departed Pakistan today after completing a week of humanitarian missions delivering reconstruction supplies to areas in northeastern Pakistan as people in the region continue to rebuild from last year's devastating earthquake that struck on October 8, 2005. The building supplies – delivered by helicopter to areas almost completely inaccessible by vehicle roads in the Allai, Kaghan, and Neelum Valleys -- will help villagers complete transitional shelters and infrastructure projects as winter approaches.

Pilots and crews from the Chinooks, called “Angels of Mercy” by many people due to their fast and effective response immediately after the earthquake, this week delivered over 48,000 pounds of concrete mix and 75,000 pounds of corrugated iron sheets as part of continuing reconstruction efforts in NWFP and AJK. The Chinooks and their crews ferried loads of iron sheeting, plastic PVC piping, steel bars or “rebars”, and dry cement to help villagers rebuild individual homes and community infrastructure projects such as water facilities. On October 10, Chinook crews delivered some 25 tons of cement, steel bars and PVC piping to Dana and Machiara in NWFP that will be dedicated to a concrete water tank crucial for the local water network.

In addition to the building materials, one special trip included delivery of sewing machines to women in the Allai valley who are former residents of Mehra Camp. The sewing machines will help keep open three community centers that provide employment to women in the area. Some of the helicopter landing areas were as small as 50 feet wide, about 7,500 feet above sea level. Many of the helicopter crew members had returned to Pakistan after assisting with relief efforts last year. Bart McPeak, a Chinook pilot from Kansas City, Kansas said, “It’s a good feeling to know that with what we’ve brought them, they’ll be better prepared to get through the cold.”

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 United States, through USAID, has pledged \$206 million over the next four years in earthquake reconstruction assistance to Pakistan. This is in addition to a \$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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