

£172million... is what we OVERSPENT on Foreign Aid last year by mistake - as sneaked out by the Government on Friday. That's enough to keep Port Talbot steel plant alive for six months

- If you want to end foreign aid madness, you can sign the petition [HERE](#)
 - Extraordinary figure part of £513million rise in foreign aid in 2015
 - Overseas aid spending has now risen to a highest-ever £12.2 billion
 - Overspend 'will anger taxpayers', said Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg
 - See more on the foreign aid petition at www.mailonsunday.co.uk/foreignaid
- By [SIMON WALTERS POLITICAL EDITOR FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY](#)

A political row erupted last night after it emerged that Britain overspent its [foreign aid budget](#) by nearly £200 million last year.

The extraordinary figure was part of a massive £513 million rise in foreign aid in 2015 following the Government's decision to set a controversial new target.

Overseas aid spending has now risen to a highest-ever £12.2 billion. But shock figures from the Department for International Development (DFID) show the Government overshot its own target by £172 million.



Facing closure: A worker at Port Talbot steelworks, which could be kept alive for another six months with the money the Government overspent on for foreign aid last year

March 31: Cameron 'ruling nothing out' for Port Talbot

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The news came as a Mail on Sunday campaign launched last week to scrap David Cameron's pledge to spend a set percentage of the national income on overseas aid won overwhelming support, as an astonishing 150,000 people signed our petition on a Parliamentary website.

The Mail on Sunday is calling on the Government to drop the target, which critics say encourages spending by necessity rather than need, and invites waste and corruption.

It is the biggest newspaper e-petition ever, with the number of signatures on our petition already enough to force MPs to consider a debate.

The Prime Minister has pledged to spend 0.7 per cent of the UK's Gross National Income (GNI) on developing countries.

But new statistics quietly released on the DFID's website show that the Government not only met the target, it exceeded it by £172 million – money that could have been spent on jobs, homes, schools or hospitals in Britain.

Although the excess spend is only 0.01 per cent of GNI, the sheer scale of our national income means it is a vast amount.

Last night, Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg said: 'There can be no more graphic example of the idiocy of setting such a fixed target. This overspend will anger taxpayers who do not want their money frittered away on politicians' vanity.'



Pressure: The new figures increase pressure on Business Secretary Sajid Javid, who has refused to use public funds to bail out the crisis-hit steel industry.



Spending on overseas aid by Mr Javid's department more than doubled to £194 million last year. Meanwhile, Mr Javid has announced a new 'buy British' bid to help UK steelmakers beat off foreign competition

Javid tries reassuring Port Talbot workers amid steel crisis

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The new figures increase pressure on Business Secretary Sajid Javid, who has refused to use public funds to bail out the crisis-hit steel industry.

Yesterday, despite the huge foreign aid overspend, Mr Javid announced a new 'buy British' bid to help UK steelmakers beat off foreign competition, saying the NHS, town halls and other public sector projects must consider buying UK steel.

Spending on overseas aid by Mr Javid's department more than doubled to £194 million last year. And it has risen dramatically in other departments as the rush to spend more on aid has spread throughout Whitehall.

A Mail on Sunday investigation has found fresh examples of how taxpayers' money is being spent abroad, including:

- **More than £700 million spent on education in Pakistan where officials have creamed off enormous sums by creating fake teaching jobs and being paid for them.**
- **Up to £90 million spent on reviving the Nigerian leather tanning industry.**
- **Around £9,000 a year each going to two jailed Palestinian terrorists who brutally stabbed a British woman and murdered her friend. The money comes indirectly from British aid.**

The political controversy intensified as politicians from former Tory Chancellor Nigel Lawson to anti-child poverty campaigner and ex-Labour Minister Frank Field spoke out against the 0.7 per cent target.

The Mail on Sunday can also disclose that Mr Cameron turned down calls to delay the 0.7 per cent target 'to avoid upsetting Bob Geldof'.

International Development Secretary Justine Greening last night refused to answer ten questions put to her by The Mail on Sunday on the aid crisis.

Instead, she issued a statement defending the target and said: 'Britain faces a simple choice: either we wait for the problems of the world to arrive on our doorstep, or we take action to tackle them at source.'



Special relationship: The Global Center For Development was given £5.9million. The US-based think-tank has a £12million HQ (pictured)



Ms Greening said she had carried out a review of aid spending to ‘make sure taxpayers’ money is being spent in the right way’.

Foreign Aid spend is calculated according to GNI – which reached £1.7 trillion last year – meaning the Government is obliged to try to increase spending until it reaches 0.7 per cent of this figure. Last year MPs voted to enshrine this target in law, turning on its head the usual Whitehall approach of keeping budgets down to curb the deficit.

The first shocking aid figures published since the new law took effect show how spending has boomed since the decision.

While more than 98 per cent is spent in the world’s poorest countries in Africa and Asia, other beneficiaries of the spending bonanza were European countries such as Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which received £1 million each, while Ukraine received £16 million in the wake of the invasion of Crimea by Russia.

STOP THE FOREIGN AID MADNESS NOW: AS ANOTHER £12BN OF YOUR TAXES ARE SPLURGED ON HAND-OUTS FOR TERRORISTS AND KILLERS, IF YOU CARE ABOUT SPENDING ON FOREIGN AID BUDGET, SIGN OUR PETITION NOW



The Mail on Sunday has launched a petition on the official Parliamentary website calling on the Government to scrap the law requiring us to spend a fixed 0.7 per cent of national wealth on foreign aid. The figure is currently £12 billion and will rise to £16 billion by 2020.

Rather than helping people who desperately need it, much of this money is wasted and the Great British Giveaway fuels corruption, funds despots and corrodes democracy in developing nations.

If you want to stop this madness and see that our money is better spent, click here:

[Yes, I want to make a difference and sign the petition](#)

The link will take you to the Parliamentary petitions web site where our petition is displayed. Once you have signed it, please share it with your family and friends using social media. You must be a UK resident or citizen to sign.

Please note that signing the petition will entail you clicking on a link sent to your email inbox.

100,000 people have signed the petition, which will force politicians to at least consider a parliamentary debate on the issue. But more signatures will give the argument to reconsider that aid budget even more weight.

- **If you want to end the madness, sign our petition [here](#)**

And the amount of UK taxpayers' money given by the Government to the European Union to spend on aid rose by £147 million, to reach £963 million.

Although most of Britain's foreign aid budget is controlled by DFID, an increasing proportion – £2.4 billion – is now distributed by other Government departments, not traditionally associated with giving aid to the poorest countries, such as the Business Department.

While DFID spending on aid has gone down by £318 million, foreign aid spending by the rest of Whitehall has rocketed by £830 million, resulting in a £513 million overall increase.

Asked to explain why the 0.7 per cent target was exceeded, a Government spokesman said: 'These are provisional statistics that will fluctuate.'

MP tells Cameron to use foreign aid to pay UK flood defences

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Foreign Aid: A nation roars 'end the £12billion madness'

The Mail on Sunday's shocking investigation into how Britain wastes billions of pounds on dubious foreign aid projects has unleashed an incredible wave of anger, and sparked massive support for our campaign to bring about change.

The overwhelming response means our online petition on the official Government website is the biggest newspaper e-petition ever, and the fastest to reach the 100,000-signature milestone.



It comes after a Mail on Sunday investigation revealed the shocking ways in which the money was spent, including on this £8million palace built by Palestine, which has received £72million of foreign aid



It took less than 24 hours to reach the crucial target, which means MPs are now forced to consider holding a debate on the call to abolish Britain's commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of national income on aid every year.

At peak times our e-petition, on the official Government website, was attracting more than 150 signatures every minute.

Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg said: 'It is an indication that high-quality journalism strikes a chord with the British people.'

FOREIGN AID MADNESS

Ironically, against the backdrop of the Port Talbot steel crisis, one of the biggest rises in UK foreign aid spending last year was in Sajid Javid's Business department – it sent an extra £115m abroad compared to 2014.

New figures reveal that the 0.7 dogma meant spending £12.2 billion on aid in 2015 and the projection is that by 2020 the bill will have swelled to a staggering £16 billion.

Last night the total figure for signatures stood at well over 150,000, and that will no doubt be boosted hugely today with our further revelations of waste in the foreign aid sector. As well as signing the petition many readers emailed us and wrote to us to express their anger.

The comments of Jean Broadbent were typical. She said: 'We should not be sending so much money to other countries while we could and should be spending it in areas where we could benefit. Our steel industry could do with that money.'

Our campaign has also resulted in leading figures from the governments of Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron uniting in their opposition to the Prime Minister's vow to spend 0.7 per cent of the UK's annual wealth on aid.

The politicians ranged from Mr Blair's Welfare Minister Frank Field, to Sir Malcolm Rifkind, Foreign Secretary in Mr Major's administration.

Here is what some of them had to say:



Sir Malcolm Rifkind, left, described the target as 'foolish', while Frank Field, right, said Parliament must now review the spend in the wake of the Mail on Sunday's investigation

Sir Malcolm Rifkind

A member of the Thatcher and Major Cabinets and Foreign Secretary from 1995 to 1997.

'It was extremely foolish to set the 0.7 per cent target in law to be hit, regardless of the country's circumstances. Very few parts of the economy are protected in this way: the amounts devoted to aid should go up and down like other areas. I have no problem with giving foreign aid, but I fear they may be running out of good things to spend it on.'

Frank Field

Welfare Minister in Tony Blair's Government, ran the Child Poverty Action Group charity before entering politics.

'Thanks to The Mail on Sunday's campaign, Parliament must now review the overseas aid budget. It should be concentrated on combating the humanitarian fallout from the wars in Iraq and Syria. Justice demands we transform these refugee camps; and self-interest demands we reduce the movement of migrants across Europe and give them a chance to live decently near their own country so they can return when circumstances improve.'



Lord Nigel Lawson, left, said part of the problem was the EU and UN, while Tory MP Nigel Evans (right) said British taxpayers' money is being 'squandered on overseas aid vanity projects'

Lord Nigel Lawson of Blaby

Chancellor to Margaret Thatcher from 1983 to 1989.

'Part of the problem is that so much of the overseas aid goes through multi-lateral agencies such as the EU and the UN. We have no control at all.'

Nigel Evans

Former Commons Deputy Speaker, Tory MP for Ribble Valley and member of the Commons International Development Select Committee.

'The Mail on Sunday's brilliant exposure of the waste of hundreds of millions of pounds of aid has convinced me the 0.7 per cent target must be looked at again. British taxpayers' money is being squandered on overseas aid vanity projects when there are road potholes the size of craters in my constituency.'



UKIP MP Douglas Carswell (left) said Cameron increased foreign aid to 'appear virtuous', while Lord David Lipsey (right) said impoverished people deserved our help, but disagreed with the idea of an 'artificial target'

Douglas Carswell

The Ukip MP lived in Uganda until his teens under dictator Idi Amin. His surgeon father Wilson played a key role fighting the Aids pandemic.

'David Cameron massively increased overseas aid to try to appear virtuous. But he did it so quickly no one stopped to consider what it was being spent on. The sort of people who have dinner parties in Notting Hill think there's something unseemly about wanting to cut foreign aid. The success of The Mail on Sunday petition shows it matters to ordinary taxpayers.'

Lord David Lipsey

Top economist and Downing St adviser during 1970s Labour Government. Member of 2012 Lords inquiry into aid.

'Poor people in poor countries need and deserve our help. But a wholly artificial target which means all that matters is how much is spent on aid, not how it is spent, makes waste inevitable.'



Kate Hoey (left) said voters could now see that large sums of money were being wasted, while Lord Lewis Moonie (right) said 'every penny must represent good value'

Kate Hoey

Labour Sports Minister from 1999 to 2001. Born in Ulster.

'Many people were content to go along with the 0.7 per cent figure because it seemed a worthy aim, but now voters can see how large sums of money are being wasted, a review is long overdue.'

Lord Lewis Moonie

Defence Minister from 2000-2003. Close political and personal ally of Gordon Brown. Member of 2012 Lords inquiry into aid.

'I strongly believe in overseas aid but every penny must represent good value. The 0.7 per cent figure must be re-examined because, whatever its merits when it was first introduced, it is clear it now prioritises the amount spent rather than the result achieved.'



Tory MP Anne Main said it was 'ridiculous to simply go round looking for things to spend money on'

Anne Main

Conservative MP for St Albans and a member of the Commons International Development Committee.

'I investigated aid in Bangladesh and found a project for water wells was turned down because it was not deemed "innovative"; but a project to give mobile phone apps to slum dwellers was approved because it was deemed "innovative". It is ridiculous simply to go round looking for things to spend money on.'

Sir Gerald Howarth

Defence Minister in the Coalition Government. The Aldershot Tory MP has campaigned for years to end the 0.7 per cent target.

'This arbitrary target makes absolutely no sense in a time of austerity, when social care is unravelling and our Armed Forces are being cut so severely we can only hit Nato's two per cent annual target for increased defence spending by fiddling the books.'



Charles Walker, left, said the target 'should never have been enshrined into law', while Jacob Rees-Mogg, right, said the Government had an 'absolute duty' to spend taxpayers' money 'wisely'

Charles Walker

Conservative MP for Broxbourne and chairman of the influential Commons Procedure Committee.

'This target should never have been enshrined in law. It was an abuse of procedure to use a Private Members' Bill to commit the Government to billions of pounds of expenditure.'

Adam Holloway

Gravesham Conservative MP, ex-Grenadier Guards captain and TV newsman who won an award for his exposé of the London homelessness crisis.

'It is wrong to spend ever more on overseas aid at the expense of other important budgets such as defence. The first duty of any government is the defence of the people.'

Jacob Rees-Mogg

North East Somerset Conservative MP.

'I congratulate The Mail on Sunday for exposing the wastefulness of the 0.7 per cent target. With austerity at home there is an absolute duty on the Government to spend the taxpayers' money wisely.'



Philip Davies, MP for Shipley, said the response to the petition showed how angry people were, while Andrew Bridgen, MP for North West Leicestershire, said the current system led to 'a rush of gratuitous spending'

Philip Davies

Conservative MP for Shipley.

'The amazing response to The Mail on Sunday's petition shows how angry people are at the way the Government spends more and more on aid while making cuts at home. I look forward to the Commons debate which will show ministers the depth of feeling that exists all across the country.'

Andrew Bridgen

Conservative MP for North West Leicestershire.

'The current foreign aid system leads to a rush of gratuitous spending at the end of the financial year just to clear the budget, regardless of the worth of the projects.'

Despair for steel workers... so why ARE we giving £9million to Nigeria to help its leather tanning industry?

A steel worker at the doomed Port Talbot plant says it 'beggars belief' that David Cameron is spending hundreds of millions of pounds supporting industries abroad, when families in Britain are facing devastation.

Father-of-two Paul Stanton, one of 150,000 people to have signed The Mail on Sunday's petition demanding a Commons debate on aid, called for the Government to strictly police overseas spending and get home-grown industry on a level playing field with foreign competitors.

Britain spends close to £250 million supporting industry in developing countries – 3.5 per cent of the soaring aid budget.



Angry: Port Talbot steel worker Paul Stanton, with his wife Mary, said the foreign aid spend 'beggars belief'

Major recipients of aid for industry include Nigeria where a scheme designed to encourage business called Growth and Empowerment in States (GEMS) gets £91 million from British taxpayers, with another £112.5 million coming from the World Bank – also heavily subsidised by Britain.

And an investigation uncovered questionable practices among Nigerian leather exporters who receive tens of millions of pounds each year from the Department for International Development (DFID).

Mr Stanton, 52, who lives just a mile from the plant in Wales, said: 'Some of the things that have been going on are madness – it beggars belief. And it is happening while the steel industry here is being cut adrift – the Government should have intervened a long time ago.'

Mr Stanton is the third generation of his family to work at the Port Talbot plant. His grandfather Tom had nine children and eight of them were employed at the steelworks, now owned by Indian firm Tata.



Beneficiary: One £9million GEMS programme promotes the local meat and leather industry in Nigeria

About 4,000 jobs will be lost at Port Talbot if Tata pull out. A further 10,000 jobs are at risk at the company's other British plants and unions estimate up to 60,000 jobs could be lost in the supply chain.

The crisis has arisen because China has dumped cheap steel on world markets sending prices crashing. The Government voted against the EU imposing higher tariffs on the Chinese imports.

Mr Stanton, who returned to work in the coke ovens six years ago despite suffering a heart attack, said: 'The steelworks is all I've ever known, all this community has ever known.'

'I'm not against foreign aid but if we are sending billions of pounds abroad it has to be policed. We should be put on a level playing field with our competitors abroad and then there should be inward investment into the industry. This is about the future of the steel communities and the future of the country – what if there was a war?'

One £9 million GEMS programme in Nigeria promotes the meat and leather industry, but an investigation revealed a 700 per cent rise in leather exports – largely to Italy – was exaggerated by filling containers with rocks to collect cash coming from huge subsidies. A whistleblower told the BBC that the Department for International Development was warned about the £1.4 billion fraud but officials were 'not interested'.

Another source at GEMS said the schemes, which are run by private contractors, were 'nonsense and a waste of money'.

The source revealed: 'I remember going to the office and the only Nigerians there were cleaners, drivers or making coffee. The rest were white Europeans like me who had flown in at great cost to hold workshops.' Last night a DFID spokesman said: 'It is wrong to suggest that simply because DFID operates in the leather sector our funds have been misused.'

'We have a zero tolerance approach to misuse of DFID's funds and, where there are concerns or programmes are not performing, we take swift and robust action.'

Business Secretary Sajid Javid cut short a controversial trip to Australia to visit Port Talbot on Friday.

He told angry steelworkers: 'We are on your side.'

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/foreignaid/article-3520835/172million-OVERSPENT-Foreign-Aid-year-mistake-sneaked-Government-Friday-s-Port-Talbot-steel-plant-alive-six-months.html>