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MEMO TO: The Record

February 3, 1975

FROM : DCM - R. T. Curran *RTC*

SUBJECT: Discussion at HACU Cafeteria (1/25/75 - 11:00 a.m.)

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Robert H. Nooter, Asst. Administrator, AID/SA  
Mr. Vincent W. Brown, Director, USAID, Kabul  
Mr. R. T. Curran, Deputy Chief of Mission, Kabul  
Governor Abdul Mohammad Sherzai (Lashkargah)  
Governor Abdul Tawab Asefi (Herat)

At the conclusion of a four-hour tour of the lower Helmand area, Mr. Nooter and Mr. Brown met with Governor Sherzai (who is also General-President of HAVA) and Governor Asefi to discuss the results of Mr. Nooter's visit to the Valley.

Mr. Nooter pointed out that the new U.S. legislation made large capital projects difficult for us to finance. He added that our legislation asked that we help with smaller projects in areas such as drainage, canal maintenance, rural health, basic education and rural construction, all of which would be of immediate benefit to the rural people. Mr. Nooter said he thought that the Afghans should look to the oil-producing countries for major project financing.

Mr. Brown underlined the new directions of the AID program in Afghanistan and then mentioned agro-business as a possible area for U.S. cooperation. This idea seemed to interest Governor Sherzai and he asked a number of questions about it. Governor Asefi also was enthusiastic about it.

Governor Sherzai then referred to the priority projects he had presented to Mr. Nooter the night before and said he understood the U.S. had problems in considering some of these ideas because of the Foreign Assistance legislation, but he hoped that a way would be found for good cooperation.

Mr. Nooter said he hoped Governor Sherzai would have a chance to visit the U.S. after all the new projects were completed. Governor Sherzai appreciated the humor implicit in that timetable, but was clearly attracted by the idea of visiting the U.S.

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The meeting ended with extremely cordial expressions of intent to work matters out to the maximum advantage of both countries. Other cordial "best wishes" were exchanged at a lunch hosted by the Governor at the Bost Hotel and at a brief farewell ceremony prior to the Nooter party's departure for Kandahar.

Clearance: AID:VWBrown(draft)

<u>DISTR:</u>	EMB	<u>USAID</u>
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MEMO TO: The Record

February 3, 1975

FROM : DCM - R. T. Curran *RTC*

SUBJECT: Helmand Discussions, HAVA Office, Lashkargah  
(1/24/75 - 8:00 p.m.)

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Robert H. Nooter, Asst. Administrator, AID/SA  
Mr. Vincent W. Brown, Director, USAID, Kabul  
Mr. Zariel Tyson, USAID, Kabul  
Mr. R. T. Curran, Deputy Chief of Mission, Kabul  
Governor Abdul Mohammad Sherzai (Lashkargah)  
Governor Abdul Tawab Asefi (Herat)  
Mr. Mehrabuddin Formali, Chief of Agricultural  
Systems, HAVA  
Mr. Mohammad Shuja; Mr. Oman; Mr. Aziz Gul  
Messrs. Rau, Hallman, Wilson, Denton & Schwarzwald

Discussions were held at the HAVA office in Lashkargah to acquaint Mr. Nooter with Afghan concerns and problems in the Helmand Valley. Governor Sherzai was the principal spokesman for the Afghans; Mr. Nooter spoke for the U.S. side.

The Governor began the discussion by saying "the family doctor (he clearly meant the U.S.) is the best one to solve family problems." The Governor said there were definite problems in the Valley and he hoped to have U.S. cooperation in solving them. The Governor mentioned four areas which he hoped would receive priority attention in the near future:

- 1 - A catchment dam below the Kajakai to be used to collect water from the power station which would then be held until needed to supplement the whole irrigation system, particularly that served by the Seraj Canal.
- 2 - Drainage works in the southern Helmand System.
- 3 - Small diversion dams and irrigation systems to augment the land now under cultivation.
- 4 - A dam in the Misakala River to control flooding.

The Governor also mentioned rural education, rural health, and rural development as areas that needed to be looked at in the Helmand.

Mr. Nooter replied that he was from Missouri and was looking forward to seeing things with his own eyes. Mr. Nooter said he was in Afghanistan as a result of President Daoud's request to Secretary Kissinger. Mr. Nooter said that it is his impression that there has been progress in the Helmand over the past 20 years, but that the area had not reached its full potential. Part of his visit,

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Mr. Nooter said, would be to study the limitations on progress, try to learn more about the area, and then discuss the matter further.

The Governor said that they would show Mr. Nooter as much as the short time available would allow, and added that it is more important to Afghanistan whether the U.S. wants to help and not the amount of help.

Mr. Nooter commented that an important U.S. contribution might be in the technical area if this was what the Afghans wanted. He indicated that he wasn't limiting U.S. assistance, but this was an area where the U.S. had significant resources.

Governor Sherzai welcomed this idea and said that good management and efficient maintenance could bring the project to a successful conclusion. He wanted Mr. Nooter to know that the Afghans understand this.

Mr. Nooter said that operation and management of the Valley has to be an Afghan function -- outsiders can't do it.

The Governor agreed and said that Afghanistan has changed enormously in the last 20 years, most particularly since the advent of the Republican regime. The Governor said he was convinced that Afghanistan could implement the planned activities in the Valley.

In response to the Governor's question, Mr. Nooter said he would like to look at the area's salinity and water logging situation, and asked what plans the Afghans had to deal with these problems.

Governor Asefi interjected that he would like to know about financing new plans.

Mr. Nooter replied that the principal purpose of the visit is to discover what role the U.S. should play without getting into the details of financing. Mr. Nooter said it was important to have a sense of the size and kind of problems in the area, and the Government's priorities in solving them before getting into the details of financing.

Governor Asefi said that it was very important to get moving in the Helmand Valley. He said that there was criticism from the lowest to the highest levels of Afghans about slowness in finishing the Helmand. Mr. Nooter indicated he understood the sense of urgency.

Mr. Shuja (head of HAVA's technical section) then went through a chart talk on the priorities for new projects, including the catchment dam, changing the location of the Seraj Canal, the

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modernization of the lower Helmand Canal System, and the Misakala River dam.

In the concluding discussion the Governor was asked a series of questions about land reallocation problems, support requirements, local currency and foreign exchange needs, drainage and water logging and feasibility studies. Governor Sherzai and Governor Asefi indicated that they thought they could handle the land reallocation problems and that the Central Government would provide necessary local currency. On feasibility studies, Asefi said they had some studies, but he was concerned at the length of time it seemed to take AID to produce adequate studies and to get started on new projects.

Mr. Nooter indicated that the U.S. side would try to look into this.

In response to a question about the importance of more participation, specifically in paying taxes and water charges on the part of the Afghan farmers, Governor Asefi said that it was difficult to impose water charges until the whole project was finished.

The meeting concluded with very cordial best wishes from the Afghans to Mr. Nooter and Mr. Brown.

Clearance: AID:VWBrown(draft)

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