

(Re-typed Draft Oct. 2012)

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FROM: Richard B. Scott, DP

SUBJECT: Problems of Personalities, Rank and Politics within the HAVA  
Bureaucracy; or, Some Reasons for Delays in Helmand Drainage Project Implementation

At first glance some of the delays in the implementation of the Helmand Drainage Project are the combined results of general inefficiency on the part of HAVA, which is no surprise, and someone or some group just being difficult. We have been told from time to time that there are individuals within the HAVA that do not like the Drainage Project, thus the problems, but this is hardly an explanation. Recent observations and discussions within HAVA suggest the situation is more complex than the above single statement and suggest that as the project develops and expands, demanding more cooperation between HAVA technical sections, the situation could be expected to worsen. The effect of Mr. Formali being removed from his responsibilities as AID's chief contact, if not only, with HAVA is not clear. Much depends on how much political damage has occurred and how flexible the personalities are in the key roles within HAVA relative to AID involvement in Helmand.

The starting point for this analysis and perhaps a key problem, is the location of the Drainage project within HAVA and the very limited access AID has to communicate with the technical sections that should be involved but are not. To date, for all practical purposes, AID is limited to contact with one man, the head of the Planning Section (Mr. Formali) which is a section of the Technical Division of HAVA. This statement ignores the AID limited contact with the governor who is also president of HAVA. His position will be discussed below but at this point it is enough to state that the governor appears to be very little involved or informed of day-to-day project events and appears to get involved when AID informs him of a major block. This may be a slight overstatement but it appears that there has been a reluctance on the part of Mr. Formali to have the governor fully involved or informed about the project. There were cases where, during AID-HAVA top level meetings, it appeared that some subjects and issues were being presented to the governor for the first time. While this may appear as an element in the delegation of authority, it does not fit with the usual patterns of control of governors vis-à-vis a foreign project. More likely, it has been willful manipulation or limitation of available information.

The Planning Section is a branch of the Technical Division of HAVA and ranks equal with the O&M Section and Engineering Section. In the planning and implementation stages of the project to date, the head of the Technical Division (Mr. Shuja), the Planning Section's immediate superior, has generally been left out of the project discussions and arrangements with Mr. Formali, AID's coordinator with HAVA, in direct but limited

contact with the governor, thus bypassing Mr. Shuja. Besides this bureaucratic blunder of ignoring the chain of command and thereby becoming a threat to Mr. Shuja, there are apparently some personal animosities between the two individuals involved.

The lesser ranked man, Mr. Formali, is or was in the process of empire building, having also been one of the chief negotiators for the government with the new Kajaki Gates Project. He is energetic, with strength in his level of idiomatic English fluency and his ability to deal with foreigners. His level of technical competence is not clear. In any case, Mr. Formali has more formal education than Mr. Shuja who, it was said, is a high school graduate and perhaps has questioned (one source) the other's ability to supervise and give him orders. In the past Mr. Shuja had had AID counterparts working directly with him, being the head of the Technical Division. At the time of the 1973 Coup, Mr. Shuja along with four or five other individuals were suspected of using government resources for their personal gain, growing cotton on government land. He left under a cloud at that time for a period of a year but then returned to his original position. This suggests combinations of innocence and/or power political friends/relatives in Kabul. He was the only one of the group to survive his job. But no doubt on return to the Helmand he was suspect. He did not play a strong role, or hardly any role, in early discussions on the Drainage Project and subsequently got bypassed. He later admitted that at the time of these early discussions he was on probation and could not express his views. He stated that he did not accept many of Mr. Formali's decisions.

Other sections within the Technical Division have also been cut out of the planning stages of the AID project to some great extent but have been turned to directly for support activities which have been refused. The Planning Section has no authority to order cooperation from Engineering Section, being of equal rank. The route should be via the head of the Technical Division, Mr. Shuja, but there are no communications there. Informal or extra bureaucratic contacts and cooperation are out because of the awareness of the chain of command and because of the general personal animosities resulting from the way the project has been handled within HAVA. The head of the Engineering Section made it very clear in one discussion that the Drainage Project had nothing to do with his section. The statement was made with some degree of hostility or heat. The Engineering Section, however, has the responsibility to control and monitor construction work completed for HAVA by HACU. The recent delays in coming to an official agreement, a work contract, over the beginning drain work reflect the Engineering Section's non-involvement. They simply did not, apparently, discuss the issue with HACU. The delay issue was taken to the governor and he simply, unbureaucratically, bypassed normal procedures by ordering HACU to begin construction without a contract. This could have repercussions when it comes time for payment. Although informal agreement has been reached that Ghulam Farouq, present acting head of the Extension Service, will act as head of the 1975 Farm Economic Survey (FES) on the HAVA side from the governor and from Farouq's immediate superior, the head of the Agriculture Division, the formal paperwork, a letter from the governor stating the fact, has not been forthcoming. This paperwork must originate with Me. Formali who is (or was) the Drainage Project spokesman within HAVA. The FES is part of the Drainage Project. The bureaucratic problem with this act is that it would put Farouq under the Technical Division for the

period of the survey and this means discussing the issue with the head of that Division. Farouq went to Mr. Shuja last week (15-22 Dec.) with a request, informal, for the use of a group of men within the Technical Division (specifically Engineering). For FES interviewers, a system of personnel borrowing was used for the same survey in 1970. Not only was he told that the men were busy and not available, although in fact they had been inactive for a couple of months, he was asked about the survey itself; this apparently being the first Mr. Shuja knew of it. And second, Farouq was asked under what authority he was acting as a member of the Technical Division, since the FES is located within the Planning Section. In short, if Farouq could be formally cleared to head the FES, the survey could very likely get underway. Farouq is not politically involved in all this; he is an outsider, from the Agricultural Division, and academically not politically oriented.

One possible further complication to having Farouq cleared for the FES is the fact that he is a Pashtun from Kandahar and one of the many political-bureaucratic splits that is present within HAVA is ethnic-linguistic in origin: Farsi or Dari vs. Pashtu speakers. Mr. Shuja is noted for his support of Pashtu-speaking employees. In short, it could be that Mr. Formali sees Mr. Farouq as a threat but this is speculation. The request for Mr. Farouq must result in the request for other personnel (Engineering) and, noted above, conflict. Delay in the first step of survey implementation at least delays bringing the conflict into the open. According to one source the recent replacement for Mr. Fromali is a Pashtun.

To what degree the governor is aware of the total scene is not clear. It was stated that since he is not a technical man by training, he tends in staff meetings not to order but to agree to or look for a consensus if one emerges or requests a future consensus if one does not emerge in a meeting. Disagreements among the parties are apparently handled softly. A case in point is the delay in the drain project caused by non-action on the part of Engineering, this issue was skirted. Given alternatives for action the governor does make decisions but apparently he does not try to solve political disagreements between technical sections by orders.

At some point this general problem must be dealt with. The negative attitudes within HAVA toward the Drainage Project are likely to continue to generate, or stagnate, depending on who politically is Mr. Formali's replacement. While it is not easy for AID to become involved in this issue, most will state that it is a HAVA problem not AID's, some attempt must be made to clear the air. The Planning Section does not likely have the trained personnel to do the work necessary to complete Phase I. As the Kajaki Gates Project develops under the Planning Section also, the personnel shortage is likely to be more critical. There is a continuous effort to build a case for the delays or at least some of the delays in the project being the result of AID inaction.

In conclusion, AID must be prepared to face this problem squarely. There is little indication the personalities within HAVA are willing to, at the present time. The results of the shift of Mr. Formali away from the Drainage Project are not clear. The key question to answer is who, politically, will now be placed in charge of the Drainage Project on the HAVA side and what will be the residual attitudes of that individual and other key people, e.g. Mr. Shuja, over this past mishandling of the project. We should not

assume that the past blocks to the project were necessarily related directly to the project itself but to the political context within which it was functioning.