

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

SCOTT

TO : Mr. John Standish, CDE

DATE: March 27, 1976

FROM : Richard B. Scott, CDE

SUBJECT: Focus of HAVA Work on Drainage-Land Development, Location of Four Operational Drag-Lines, and the USAID Drainage Project; Past, Present and Future

During the field work on the present Farm Economic Survey, I have come across four drag-lines at work on major Helmand construction activities for which there is no foreign aid nor technical assistance involved, as far as I am aware. Before Phase II, someone from your office, I would suggest Reilly, should make a detailed analysis of these activities, which obviously reflect HAVA priorities, so that USAID might reorient its energies along the line with these HAVA priorities. I think if we compare the magnitude of HAVA energies and funds being spent on these activities with those on Phase I of the USAID project, a reorientation will be seriously considered. The analysis I am proposing will require raising the issue first with the Governor, allowing access to the information, as well as a number of field visits, some under trying conditions. While we are not directly involved in the work I will briefly outline here, some noted in previous memos, USAID cannot ignore the fact nor separate our drainage project from these major undertakings. They tend to overlap in personnel, equipment, funds and areas. USAID must learn what is going on in these areas if future planning is to be meaningful. A simple statement that other HAVA projects will not detract from the USAID drainage project is not enough.

1. Shamalan: The S10.7 lateral is now complete and water is in a great portion, probably most, of it. Meetings are being held with farmers on who will received water from this new source, and who will continue to receive water from the old laterals. When these changes will take place is not clear, probably not this crop year since new farm ditches are required to be dug by the farmers.



The S10.7 lateral was started under a USAID loan, "The Shamalan Project," but is being completed by HAVA alone since USAID withdrew when parts of the project, as proposed, could not get instituted because of lack of firmer support.

Drain "K" is a new major drain being constructed in the Zorist-Khalaj area along roughly the same line as proposed in the Shamalan Feasibility Study. This work was not started during the time of USAID involvement. When complete, it will be about 12 kilometers long but the work reportedly has been hampered by a conglomerant layer. A map showing the alignment of both this drain and the S10.7 lateral has been furnished your office, originally coming from the HAVA engineering office. Only a single request was necessary.

This major construction work is apparently aimed at getting a new source of water into the water-short area of Zorist-Khalaj which will allow considerable amounts of new land in the area to be settled, as well as provide a more reliable source of water for the farmers already there. The drain, apparently, is for the control of the considerable ground water seepage coming from the desert and probably from the Marja, if not Nad-i-Ali waste-ways, area.

Need to Monitor: In nearly all areas of Shamalan, the land on the down-slope side of the Shamalan canal, and other major laterals, have drainage problems. This seems, according to all accounts, to be the result of the leaky nature of these structures because of soil type, sandy loam. The Bureau of Reclamation, before leaving the Shamalan Project, frequently warned of the potential dangers of placing the new S10.7 lateral in the up-slope location without providing at the same time an adequate and planned drainage system, i. e. , a complete irrigation system. The results of putting the water in the lateral, which has mostly remained dry these past two years, must be monitored carefully to catch drainage problems before they reduce production. HAVA, acting alone, is not likely to take this precaution and while USAID does not have any remaining direct responsibility, we do have a kind of moral obligation to the farmers who we originally set out to aid. The farmers mostly did not request the project, most did not know what it involved, and were never told (see my memos from April 1971 into 1973, in the files), and certainly should not be allowed to suffer from the incomplete project, the incomplete system. This drainage monitoring and, perhaps, action can fit into the present USAID Drainage Project.

The Future: With settlement and land-water use will come drainage problems if future patterns follow past examples. As noted in a previous memo, perhaps our present drainage project can be slightly reoriented to focus on the drainage problems encountered by the new settlers. Little, if any, support is presently being given these new settlers. Such a focus could give us clear targets of opportunity in areas of need among people who are clearly in the poorest of the poor category. At the same time, our activity would parallel the activities in areas that apparently HAVA has as a priority. They are spending their own unsupported funds there.

During the recent period of maintenance shut-down for the total irrigation system and drag-lines were taken from the USAID Project Area of Nad-i-Ali, the two drag-lines associated with this work in Shamalan remained at their original work on the S10.7 lateral and the outlet drain "K".

II. Darwishan: Little is known of the details of the work being done in and south of the Sofar area in Dawrishan, in the extreme south of this original project area. What is known is that the work is the construction of major drainage ditches; that it involves two operational drag-lines, observed working on 17 and 20 of March 1976; that it has been continuous for the past two years; and that the work is not being planned, supervised nor aided by outside resources or personnel. It apparently is operating in presently unsettled lands which suggests the future disposition. Over this past two years, a great deal of settlement activity has been focused in the central and southern Darwishan areas. This activity should be studied by USAID to see how it relates or potentially relates to our future activities in the valley.

III. Chakhansur: While this district lies outside the Helmand Province and generally outside the HAVA activity area, and, by policy, outside the area of USAID interest in involvement, HAVA and HACU have major interests and funds involved in the construction of irrigation structures in that area. The equipment used in the work has been, if not in the present continuous, for the most part provided by past USAID projects. This work apparently involves water short areas (all areas I have visited during the Farm Economic Survey in the southern reaches of Helmand Province can get adequate water for about 1/3 to 1/4 of their land in any one year), if not plans for future land settlement. I have heard discussion of plans for a hydro-electric installation, similar to the Ghrishk installation, on this new major canal (Soldiers Canal?). This work has been going on for the past 2-3 years, at least. The canal was

Mr. John Standish (cont'd.)

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designed by now Minister of Mines and Industry, previous Governor of Herat Province, previous vice president of HAVA and engineer by training.

Summary and Conclusions: While various mission staff are aware of and have visited the sites listed above, there has been no systematic effort to gain detailed information about them officially and directly from HAVA nor has USAID carefully considered the unknown details or plans for these areas as they may relate to or influence our present drainage project, to my knowledge. The activities on the part of HAVA-HACU obviously reflect priorities of which USAID should be fully aware for future planning. Where feasible, these priorities should be focused on in future phases of the drainage project, and certainly every effort should be made to insure that the two activities are not competing for the same limited resources. Until we have a clear understanding of the details of these construction activities, we cannot be certain that this competition is not already in effect. Thus, the need for open discussion with HAVA and an analysis of the situation.

I am available for discussion on any of the above points at your convenience.

CC: A/D:FHSligh
A/DD:EBarbour
PARD:SStone
DP:Rogers/Johnson/Carner
PARD-LASH:Geter/Tyson