

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Washington, D. C. 20523

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE OF MEETING: May 24, 1976

SUBJECT: Meeting with Governor Sherzai at Lashkar Gah on May 24, 1976

PARTICIPANTS: Governor Sherzai, Messrs. Zafari*, Aman, Azar Gul, Rayeq and Rashid
Messrs. Brown, Barbour, Stone, Kumorek, Geter, Burton, Liston, Jones, Mildner, Bigler and Nielson

COPIES TO: D, DD, DP (3), NE/NA (2), ECON (2), C&R (2), RD (8), CDE

Mr. Brown introduced the newly arrived members of the Soil and Water Survey Team, Messrs. Jones, Mildner, Bigler and Nielson, and Mr. Liston, whom he had not previously met, to the Governor.

Mr. Brown then told the Governor that Mr. Nooter would be arriving in Lashkar Gah at 10:30 a.m. on June 7 and depart 11:00 a.m. on June 8. He will be accompanied by Mr. Knoll, who is an Office Director, the AID equivalent of Mr. Landy, whom the Governor had met at lunch. Mr. Stone has prepared a detailed schedule for Mr. Nooter's visit which he will show to the Governor for approval and suggestions. Mr. Nooter is looking forward to seeing the Governor again and is a strong supporter of the Drainage Project. If the Governor has any special points he would like to raise with Mr. Nooter, he can give them to Mr. Stone.

Mr. Brown thanked the Governor for his selection of counterparts for the Soil and Water Team. They are already working and have had a field trip. He understood that two experts provided by WAPA had already arrived.

Mr. Brown also thanked the Governor for his help in preparing the Soils laboratory for the Soil and Water Survey Team and providing water for it.

Mr. Brown expressed his thanks for the Governor's assistance in appointing a new Construction Coordinator to work with HCC. This should provide better rapport and understanding between HCC and HAVA.

* Mr. Zafari interpreted throughout the meeting.

DRAFTING OFFICER: Ernest J. Barbour

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Mr. Brown reported that Letters of Understanding Nos. 8 and 9 are now in the typewriter. He will sign them both tonight and they will be presented to the Governor tomorrow morning. When the Governor signs them, HCC can start work on Drain #2 and related structures.

Mr. Brown said that when Mr. Barbour met with the Governor on May 17, Mr. Shuja had raised three questions in connection with the Phase I evaluation. Mr. Brown would like to answer those questions now:

1. Why does HAVA have to do the Darweshan Master Plan alone?

Mr. Brown was of the opinion that the SCS Team can provide help in this connection. Since Darweshan will be done after the other three areas, it can incorporate the experience gained from the first three. This is a master plan in a program, not an engineering sense. It lays out methodology, time frame and resources needed but does not include technical drawings. The USAID hopes that as much as possible can be done before the evaluation, but there is no problem if the plan is not finished by that time.

2. Why should not Afghan organizations also participate in the evaluation?

Mr. Brown pointed out that Letter of Understanding No. I provides for HAVA participation in the evaluation. He has no problem with WAPA and Ministry of Planning also participating. In fact, he believes it is absolutely essential that HAVA participate. The evaluation will include two USAID experts, a representative of a private company, Development Alternative Inc., and Mr. James Stevenson, a former AID engineer who is now retired. Mr. Brown said the review is seen as a management tool for HAVA and USAID to identify problems and their solutions so that the project may reflect any changes necessary. The evaluation is not an audit or an inspection. The Governor should designate a representative to work with USAID in the review. The review will start on June 10, after Mr. Nooter's departure.

The third question dealt with a reconciliation of the target kilometers of drains to be constructed or improved in Phase II and in HAVA's Seven Year Plan. Mr. Brown said that HAVA's plan was the more important plan; therefore, USAID plans should be reconciled with HAVA's plan. He saw no problem in doing this. It would be necessary to look at machine needs as well as the amount of work to be done by hand, and he would like to discuss this with the Governor at their next meeting.

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Hand Lashkar

HCC should have an idea of the magnitude of the work involved. Farm drains are the most important part of all. Mr. Brown said that he understood that no satisfactory bids had been received by HAVA for contracting day labor. Mr. Brown emphasized that the success or failure of the project is the ability to mobilize hand labor. HAVA is having trouble managing 200 laborers. A study has been made which indicates that 6,800 laborers will be required in four years. There is an important question of HAVA management involved. During the drought years, the Food for Work Program had 3,000 workers in the Helmand Valley. Mr. Brown suggested that a special committee of HAVA and USAID representatives be named to study the problem and actions needed by both sides. As an example of the problems involved, Mr. Brown said that the Governor cannot pay labor on the basis of the amount of earth moved because of current GOA regulations. He can only hire people for a daily wage. If that rule could be changed so that people were paid for the amount of work they did, the supervisory problem would be much simpler. There is no solution today to such problems but some type of government action is necessary to solve them.

Mr. Brown then said he had two more small points to make. The Embassy is changing its airplane; it will be getting a smaller plane which will carry seven passengers in addition to the pilot and co-pilot. The problem is that the propeller turns very fast and throws rocks from the ground on to the fuselage. This airplane cannot use the Lashkar Gah air field unless some improvements to the surface are made. Mr. Brown asked the Governor's advice on how to get GOA approval to make such improvements. He said he thought that the project could be charged with the cost of putting down a thin coat of asphalt to hold down surface rocks. This would not be paving but a treatment to improve the surface. He understood that the asphalt was available in Afghanistan and that HCC had the necessary rollers. USAID engineers estimate that the work can be done for approximately \$5,000. In addition there would be a quarterly cost of approximately \$500 for maintenance of the air strip surface.

The Governor raised a question as to whether the asphalt would be available in Afghanistan and also said he believed the cost figure was too low. He suggested that Mr. Brown check with the Ministry of Planning and Mr. Brown agreed to do so.

When the new SCS and USAID team arrived in Lashkar Gah, the Governor gave his permission to establish a recreation house which also had rooms for visitors. Now that the project is expanding, there is a need to use the house for new people. USAID has talked to WAPA about using the old staff house for transients. If this is agreeable to the Governor, USAID will continue its negotiations with WAPA.

The Governor responded that he had no problems with this if it was cleared with the Ministry of Planning and Mr. Mohammadi.

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This concluded the items on Mr. Brown's agenda. There were no other questions raised on the American side.

The Governor thanked Mr. Brown for the points he had raised. With regard to the evaluation, he said WAPA, Ministry of Planning and HAVA should be involved in the evaluation so that they would all understand the problems which faced the project. He thought that representatives of all these organizations should be briefed on problems and obstacles so that they are aware of the work necessary. Mr. Brown said he understood and agreed with this since there were many problems, including the late arrival of the U. S. team which some officials might not be familiar with. The Governor then said with regard to labor payment that it should be made on the basis of the amount of work done. He intended to have the bids for labor contracts re-examined because the gap between what HAVA thought was acceptable and the bids submitted was very large. He said that he had no doubt that HAVA could manage a large number of laborers if the money were available to pay them. Mr. Brown said that he agreed with this provided that HAVA gave training to foremen and straw bosses who could supervise the laborers. The Governor said he doubted that large number of laborers were available in the Helmand Valley and that people might have to be brought in from other areas in which case there were problems of labor camps, transportation, etc. Mr. Brown pointed out that large number of laborers would not be needed immediately but only gradually. The Governor said that machinery should be used for the greatest extent possible and that labor should be used on other projects. He saw labor necessary only to supplement machines. Mr. Brown said he would like to come back to that subject later and give the Governor a memo for discussion at their next meeting. He said that studies which had recently been made concluded that adequate labor can be found in the Helmand Valley, assuming the availability of one person per family who would work 150 days a year. He said he agreed that the most important thing was to get the job done.

Mr. Aman spoke up to clarify a point which had been made at last week's meeting. He said that HCC was not a private organization but a governmental organization which had been changed to corporate status. However, it is still totally owned by the government. Mr. Brown said that although he had not been present last week, he believed that the reference was to the newly independent status of HCC as compared to its previous status as subordinate to HAVA. Mr. Aman promised to send USAID copies of the HCC Charter, and it was agreed that meetings would be held to work out a new method of doing business taking HCC's new status into account.

Mr. Brown thanked the Governor of getting rid of the poppies. He asked what the outlook was for next year. The Governor said that in his opinion production of poppies would decrease. He pointed out that control of poppy growth was required on a nationwide basis and that it is very difficult for a single Provincial Governor to eradicate the

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practice in his own province without strong national support. However, he emphasized that no poppies were growing in any of the Helmand Valley project areas.

The meeting concluded with expressions of mutual gratitude by Mr. Brown and the Governor and hopes for increased mutual work next year.