

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Larry K. Crandall - DP

DATE: January 8, 1977

FROM : Richard B. Scott - DP

SUBJECT: Rural Development and Government Priorities in Land Settlement

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The settlement of landless farmers and nomads has a high priority with the government as evidenced by planning documents (e.g., new Seven Year Plan) and actions over the past two - three years (e.g., see Social Analysis section of Helmand Drainage Project PP, 1975 and 1976). In a recent document originating in the Ministry of Planning, "Request to the UN/FAO World Food Programme for Assistance in a Project for Economic and Social Development," December 1976, plans are outlined to settle about 15,000 families in eight different provinces over the next five years. The services to be made available to the new settlers imply some sort of integrated rural development approach. But the Land Reform Department of the Ministry of Finance is responsible for implementation. It is not known if RDD is to be involved. Observations in the Helmand Valley of recent land settlement activities (my memo: "HAVA Priority of Land Settlement and the Central Helmand Drainage Project," June 30, 1975) suggest that even with a long-established and active Office of Land Settlement and most other services centralized under HAVA, e.g., Agricultural Extension large-scale settlement activities have resulted in a dilution of support services for the settlers to almost nothing.

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USAID is moving into a very experimental and very expensive pilot activity (which very closely replicates the generally unsuccessful systems of Community Development attempted in various parts of the world in the 1960s) in an area (Logar) of long-established, stable farming communities. Should USAID not rather consider putting these same talents to work on an active, large-scale settlement problem, in which the government is giving open priority, and will require a nearly identical system of coordinated government services, if the new settlers are not to face major hardships at the early stages? There is likely a direct relationship between settler drop-out and hardships faced. It is not likely that USAID can or would want to escape from the Logar scene, although there are factors that suggest such an action would not be misguided. But it might be worthwhile to discuss RD settlement support with key individuals in the GOA, e.g., Planning and RDD. This is potentially a new but related project or subproject. This is not to suggest that USAID become directly involved in the actual settlement activity which tends, probably to be highly political in nature, not an activity that AID/W would find



acceptable, would probably be frustrating for the involved technicians, and is not an area of USAID competence outside conditions similar to those in Viet Nam. It is proposed that USAID would be directly involved in those aspects of the settlement program that relate to rural services and development, an IRD-oriented activity. Experiments would be required on how to best integrate line ministries' services as well as on how to introduce the services into the social context. There would probably be a better chance of success than in Logar since such a project would be dealing with new "communities" of recently moved persons with many obligations to cooperate with the government. The basic institutions like water distribution systems would not yet have been established.

AID/W could probably be convinced of the validity of such a project, within the context of RD, once they were over the word "settlement." But since CD has become IRD, anything is possible. All of this assumes, of course, that the GOA would accept the validity of U.S. involvement in their land settlement program, which may be doubtful.

The first step would be discussion within the Mission; the second would be a discussion with the GOA.

cc:

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