

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Charles R. Grader, Director
Thru : Mr. Ronald A. Rogers, AD/DP
FROM : Richard B. Scott, Program Analyst

DATE: May 8, 1978

SUBJECT: Helmand Drainage Project: Saved by the Bell?

Perhaps USAID has been saved by the bell which was in fact tolling for someone else. As noted in recent previous memos there are several crucial elements that require addressing before USAID moves into Phase II of the Helmand Drainage Project. Assuming a Phase II, the recent change of government, and its effect on project timing, could be of great advantage to USAID and the project. There is no reason to press forward the project with its inadequacies. There is no pressure. The present situation perhaps offers an opportunity to make some changes that were not previously feasible. The present situation lends itself to an open and direct discussion with the GOA of some old but unaddressed key issues. It might be assumed that several of the issues, e.g., relating to the involvement of the local populations of farmers, could receive a sympathetic hearing, given present rethoric. And it should not be a sensitive matter to discuss inadequacies of projects under the previous government.

The problems I most recently outlined remain valid and in some cases have become more difficult. For example, not only has the condition precedent on mobilizing hand labor not been met, but with the transfer of Mr. Farouq to Nimroz, (combined with HAVA, if not USAID/SCS, disposition toward such a unit outside the Technical Division) the socio-economic research unit is likely a dead issue. This was also a CP. Among present personnel in HAVA, Mr. Farouq was the only one with the required skills to head the unit, other than the vice-president.

A careful review by the Project Committee of the CP's along with some of the other key issues could prove a useful exercise as preparation for perhaps the initial discussion with the GOA on USAID's largest project.

Without going again into the details which have been spelled out on previous occasions, the key issues to discuss include:

1. The status and future of HAVA: Yes or No? Organization? Under what ministry?

2. An effective system and staff for mobilizing and managing large numbers of hand laborers, including an incentive system. This could be put in the context of a lost resource to Iran.

3. Qualified staffing in the middle and upper ranks, including adequate support for the SCS long range planner.

4. The establishment of a functioning Socio-Economic Research Unit, outside the Technical Division, headed by a qualified person.

5. The establishment of a farmer information and training unit outside the Technical Division, including the Agricultural Extension Service. The emphasis should be on the involvement of HAVA as a total organization. The project is not simply construction and heavy equipment. The emphasis should also be on establishing a continuing dialogue between the farmers and the organization. This requires change in project orientations.

In summary, if these issues were openly discussed with the GOA and resolved, assuming the opportunity, the project could realistically move ahead in the context of the project design. For a variety of reasons, an open discussion of these issues with the GOA could receive a sympathetic hearing.

cc:

B. Kosheleff, RD