

**Mary & Dick Scott**

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**From:** "Mary & Dick Scott" <bmt@frii.com>  
**To:** "Kvitashvili, Elisabeth"  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 20, 2001 2:38 PM  
**Subject:** POPPY IN HELMAND  
ELSABETH,

ANOTHER QUICK NOTE. I JUST RECEIVED AN E-MAIL FROM RAHMATULLAH WHO HAS JUST RETURNED TO QUETTA FROM A TRIP TO KANDAHAR.

HIS INFO FROM HELMAND WAS THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A VERY LIGHT RAIN IN THE REGION AND PERHAPS SOME SNOW IN ORUZGHAN, THE HELMAND RIVER IS VERY LOW, JUST THE WATER ALLOWED TO PASS THROUGH THE HYDRO TURBINES FOR THE ELECTRICITY TO KANDAHAR AND LASHKAR GAH. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS VERY LITTLE WATER IN THE BOGHRA CANAL, WATER FOR ALL OF CENTRAL HELMAND, AND THAT THE FARMERS HAVE BEEN WAITING TO PLANT WHEAT. THEY NEED MORE WATER AND THEY HAVE ABOUT ONE AND A HALF MONTHS THAT THEY CAN WAIT TO PLANT WHEAT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY DID PLANT SOME POPPY. POPPY TAKES LESS WATER. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT SOME PLANTED POPPY IN THE UPPER REACHES OF THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM. THEY SAID THAT IT WAS A GAMBLE. IF ANARCHY RETURNED WITH THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN, THEN THEY WILL DO OK, IE. NO ENFORCEMENT OF THE PREVIOUS BAN. MY FRIEND SUGGESTS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO MAKE A STRONG STATEMENT NOW ABOUT NO POPPY. THE TALIBAN BAN HELD BUT NOW WITH A QUESTIONABLE NEW GOVERNMENT POPPY CAN RETURN QUICKLY. MY GUESS IS THAT IF THEY HAD ENOUGH WATER THROUGHOUT THE AREA, THAT MORE FARMERS WOULD HAVE ALREADY PLANTED POPPY KNOWING THAT THE NEW, NON-PERMANENT GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO BE MARGINAL AT BEST.

IF THE FARMERS GET ENOUGH WATER TO PLANT WHEAT THEN THEY WIL ALSO HAVE ENOUGH WATER TO PLANT POPPY. BUT THIS ALL DEPENDS ON RAIN IN THE AREA OR AT THE HIGHER ALTITUDES...SOON. MY FRIEND SUGGESTED THAT WITH SOME PRESSURE AND SOME WHEAT SEED AND FERTILIZER THAT THE FARMERS THAT ALREADY PLANTED POPPY WOULD BE WILLING TO SWITCH BACK TO WHEAT. DURING MY VISITS THERE EVERYONE AGREED THAT POPPY IS AN EVIL CROP BUT ALSO IT IS A LIVING WITH A READY MARKET, AND IT TAKES A LOT OF LABOR COSTS TO HAVE A GOOD CROP. WHILE THE TALIBAN ALWAYS GOT BLAIMED FOR THE POPPY CROP, IN THE AREAS I WORKED, CENTRAL HELMAND, THE MARKET WAS IN THE HANDS OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, SPECULATORS, NOT THE GOVERNMENT. THE TALIBAN GOT 10 PERCENT OF THE RAW OPIUM AS TAX BUT DID NOT CONTROL THE MARKET.

ALSO RAHMATULLAH SAID THAT THERE WAS A GREAT SHORTAGE OF WHEAT SEED. THAT MCI HAD SOME BUT VERY LIMITED AMOUNTS. THERE WAS SOME HIGH YIELDING VARIETIES OF WHEAT IN THE AREA BUT THAT MUCH OF IT WAS FROM THE PAST AND AFTER SEVERAL GENERATIONS, IT LOSESES ITS HIGH YIELDING CHARACTERISTICS. IN SHORT, IF THE TIME COMES TO PLANT WHEAT, CENTRAL HELMAND NEEDS MORE FRESH SEED THAN THEY HAVE ON HAND. ALL THIS ASSUMES RAIN OR ADDITIONAL WATER IN THE HELMAND RIVER.

I WILL HAVE A MEMO ON COTTON AND OTHER CASH CROPS FOR THE CENTRAL HELMAND AREA IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THIS NEW INFO. FOR WHOEVER IS WORKING ON THE LARGER PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM FOR THE AG SECTOR, TELL THEM THAT IF THEY WOULD LIKE A MODEL, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO REPEAT THE ORGANIZATION IN HELMAND OF THE HAND LABOR WE DID IN 1998-99. THE WORK SEASON IS ON US. THE CONTACTS ARE THERE WAITING TO GET TO WORK. IT LOOKS LIKE THE IRRIGATION SYSTEMS CAN BE SHUT DOWN AT ANY TIME, IF THERE IS NO RAIN. AND WE CAN GET FOOD OR CASH INTO THE HANDS OF A LOT OF MEN DOING PRODUCTIVE WORK IN PREPARATION FOR THE TIME WHEN THERE IS WATER. IT WOULD BE A COMBINATION OF DISASTER RELIEF AND REHABILITATION, BOTH CLEARLY NEEDED EVEN IN HELMAND WHERE WE KNOW WE CAN GET A LOT OF MEN WORKING QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY. EVEN WITH GOOD SUPERVISION, I COULD HAVE 1000 MEN WORKING THE FIRST MONTH AS START UP, WITH SUPPORT. ENG. JAWED AND I HAVE BEEN IDENTIFYING IRRIGATION REHABILITATION PROJECTS SINCE 1997 AND COULD MOVE VERY QUICKLY.

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I HAVE TRIED TO CONTACT MCI BUT GET VIRTUALLY NO FEED BACK.

PLEASE REMIND THE ORGANIZERS OR PLANNERS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM THAT THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT (REALLY PRODUCTIVE WORK) IS GOOD SUPERVISION IN THE FIELD SO YOU DONT HAVE MEN STANDING AROUND LEANING ON THEIR SHOVELS. PAYING A LOT OF PEOPLE TO STAND AROUND IS EASY. HAVING THEM TO BE REALLY PRODUCTIVE IS A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED. DID YOU EVER SEE A COPY OF MY FINAL REPORT FOR THE WORK FOR MCI? DAVID GARNER HAS A COPY. AND TERRY TAYLOR HAS A COPY. MORE LATER.

I TALKED WITH ENG. JAWED YESTERDAY ALSO. HE SAID THAT HE MISSED YOU AT THE BERLIN CONFERENCE. HE WENT TO BERLIN AND THEN TO A SIMILAR DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN JAPAN. BUT DONERS NEED TO FIND A WAY TO SUPPORT AFGHAN NGO'S DIRECTLY. THEY HAVE A LOT OF SKILLS AND ABILITIES BUT THEY TEND TO GET SHORT-CHANGED BY THE LARGER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PROCESS OF SUB-CONTRACTING. JAWED SENT HIS GREETINGS.

HAVE A GOOD HOLIDAY. DICK SCOTT

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