

28 SEPT 98

TO: JAMES MCHUGH, COUNSELOR

FROM: DICK SCOTT

SUBJECT: HELMAND WORK SEASON 1998

GREETINGS FROM COLORADO. WE HAVE HAD A WARM, DRY SUMMER SEASON HERE. THE SNOW FIELDS ALONG THE DIVIDE HAVE MELTED DOWN TO NEARLY NOTHING BUT THE FARMERS IN THE PLAINS MUST HAVE BEEN HAPPY WITH THE AVAILABLE WATER. WE HAVE BEEN OVER-RUN WITH VISITORS FROM TEXAS, RELATIVES. THEY HAVE HAD A RECORD SETTING HEAT WAVE THERE AND THE FARMERS, DRY LAND FARMERS, HAVE LOST VIRTUALLY ALL THEIR CROPS.

AS IN THE DROUGHT OF 1972 IN AFGHANISTAN, THE DRY LAND WHEAT FARMERS OF THE MAIMANA REGION HAD A CROP FAILURE AND THE FARMERS OF HELMAND HAD A BUMPER CROP WITH THEIR IRRIGATION WATER AND GOOD HOT, HOT WEATHER. ACCORDING TO THE MEDIA, THE U.N. JUST PUT OUT A REPORT THAT RECORDED A DROP IN OPIUM PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN THIS PAST SEASON. SOMETIMES THE U.S. FIGURES AND THE U.N. FIGURES ARE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. I WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN ANY STATISTICS FROM THE U.N. OR FROM THE U.S. ON WHAT HAPPENED IN HELMAND. I KEEP A RATHER LONG TERM FILE ON SUCH THINGS.

AFTER THE CRUISE MISSILE INCIDENT, STATE SUGGESTED THAT EVERYONE SHOULD STAY CLEAR OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES FOR A WHILE. THERE WAS APPARENTLY SOME EXCITEMENT IN PAKISTAN OVER THE ISSUE. NOTHING WAS VERY CLEAR IN THE U.S. MEDIA NOR VERY ACCURATE, I WOULD GUESS. HOW IS THE SITUATION NOW? I TALKED WITH JAWED THE OTHER DAY AND THINGS SEEMED TO BE BACK TO BEING RELATIVELY NORMAL.

IS THERE A PLAN FOR WORK ON BOGHRA DURING THIS COMING WORK SEASON? IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO MISS YET ANOTHER WORK SEASON IN HELMAND WHEN BOTH THE FARMERS AND THE TALIBAN CONTINUALLY RELATE OPIUM PRODUCTION TO THE CONDITION OF THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM. IF THE BRITISH WOULD ONLY DO SOMETHING WITH THE COTTON GIN AND THE CREDIT PROGRAM (OR LACK THERE OF) FOR FERTILIZER AS THEY PASS OUT THE COTTON SEED FOR THIS YEARS CROP. BUT FIRST, THE FARMERS NEED THE WATER FOR THE HOT SEASON...CLEAN, FLOWING CANALS FOR THE COTTON WHICH THEY WILL PLANT, ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL. IF ALL ELEMENTS WOULD HAPPEN AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, THE SHIFT FROM OPIUM COULD BE A REALITY.....PUT MASSES OF PEOPLE TO WORK WITH SHOVELS CLEANING

AND REPAIRING THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM (MONEY IN THEIR HANDS), A BETTER FLOW OF WATER THROUGH THE SYSTEM DURING THE HOT (COTTON) SEASON, A CREDIT PROGRAM FOR FERTILIZER FOR THE COTTON FROM THE COTTON GIN THAT WOULD BE PAID BACK AT TIME OF HARVEST (AND IN COMPETITION WITH THE ACTIVITIES AND KIND OF CREDIT ((PARTIAL ADVANCE PAYMENT FOR THE EXPECTED CROP)) EXTENDED BY THE OPIUM BUYERS), AND A REPAIRED COTTON GIN THAT COULD PROCESS THE EXPANDED COTTON PRODUCTION IN A TIMELY MANNER. AND GIVEN THE UNCLEAR DISAGREEMENTS THIS YEAR OVER COTTON PRICES PAID BY THE GIN, SOME TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS LIKELY NEEDED IN SETTING THE PRICE PAID TO THE FARMERS BY THE GIN. THE GOVERNMENT CANT BE TO GREEDY OR THE COTTON INDUSTRY COULD REVERT BACK TO THE PRE-1973 SITUATION WHERE THE FARMERS DID NOT SEE THE BENEFIT IN GROWING COTTON. WITH SUCH A COORDINATED EFFORT, I AM SURE THE TALIBAN WOULD RESPOND ALONG WITH THE FARMERS IN SHIFTING FROM OPIUM TO COTTON AS THE CASH CROP AT LEAST IN THE AREA IRRIGATED BY THE BOGHRA CANAL. THEY HAVE SAID THAT THEY WOULD AND I, FOR ONE, BELIEVE THEM. AS I HAVE NOTED BEFORE, SANGINE AND MUSA KALA, ETC. ARE A DIFFERENT SET OF PROBLEMS THAT PRE-DATE THE WAR.

AROUND THE FIRST OF SEPTEMBER MERCY CORPS ADVERTISED IN AN OVERSEAS WORK MAGAZINE FOR A PERSON TO OVERSEE WORK MOSTLY IN DARWISHAN: THE BRIDGE, WHICH IS ALREADY COMPLETE; THE HOSPITAL, WHICH WAS ALMOST COMPLETE IN MAY; AND SOMETHING ON THE DARWISHAN CANAL. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MIGHT BE REFERRING TO? I HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH THEM BUT GOT NON-ANSWERS BACK. IT IS TOO BAD THAT THEY DONT JUST FOCUS ON THE CENTRAL HELMAND WHERE THE OPIUM IS THE MAIN PROBLEM, THE AREA IRRIGATED BY THE BOGHRA, WHERE CHANGE CAN HAPPEN WITH A LITTLE EFFORT. I OFFERED A SLIDE SHOW ON HELMAND IF THEY WANTED TO SEE THE AREA.

BUT THE PURPOSE OF THIS FAX IS TO ASK IF THERE IS A PLAN TO DO THE WORK ON BOGHRA THAT WE HAD DISCUSSED EARLIER, AND IF THERE MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY OF ME BEING INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS? JAWED TOLD ME ABOUT THE SURVEY HAFO AND MERCY CORPS DID ALONG THE BOGHRA. SO THE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO MAKE THE ESTIMATES ON HOW MUCH OF THE CANAL CAN BE CLEANED IN THE TIME AVAILABLE WHEN THE SYSTEM CAN BE SHUT DOWN, USING HOW MANY MEN. ALONG WITH THE ESTIMATES OF THE AMOUNT OF SILT NEEDED TO BE MOVED, DID THEY ALSO ESTIMATE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE NEEDED TO CLEAN EACH KM. WITHIN THE TIME PERIOD AVAILABLE? IT WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE SIZE (CROSS-SECTION)OF THE BOGHRA.

I WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACTIVITY. I HAVE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS

TO COME TO PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN BUT I WILL BE CLEAR AT THIS END AS OF THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER, IN TIME FOR THIS WORK SEASON. USUALLY THEY CLOSED THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM FOR MAINTENANCE AROUND THE FIRST OF DECEMBER, IF NOT A BIT LATER. THE WINTER CROP NEEDS TO GET ESTABLISHED AND THE COOL WEATHER NEEDS TO COME TO ALLOW THE WHEAT TO SURVIVE WITHOUT IRRIGATION. AND THEY CANT KEEP IT CLOSED FOR A LONG PERIOD...PLUS/MINUS 60 DAYS, DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER. THE WORK PERIOD FOR THE BOTTOMS OF THE CANALS IS LIMITED.

HAS ANYONE GOTTEN ANY OF THE DRAG-LINES OPERATIONAL. FOR THE UPPER ENDS OF THE BOGHRA, DRAGLINES WOULD BE BETTER THAN HAND LABOR...THE CROSS SECTION IS REALLY BIG WHICH WOULD MEAN A RELAY OF SEVERAL MEN TO GET A SHOVEL FULL OF EARTH UP TO THE SERVICE ROAD LEVEL. THIS BECOMES LESS OF A PROBLEM DOWN IN THE NAD-I-ALI AREA WHERE THE CROSS-SECTION IS SMALLER. AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEM IN THE S-10.7 LATERAL.

IN ANY CASE, LET ME KNOW WHAT THE PLAN IS FOR THIS WORK SEASON AND IF I MIGHT BE INVOLVED. I WILL BE TALKING TO JAWED AGAIN ON ABOUT WEDNESDAY, THE 30TH. BEST WISHES. DICK SCOTT

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