

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

V13 - *hmm*
Sending a copy
to *Shamalan Project?*
And

TO : Mr. Arthur Boehme, A-DD

DATE: January 8, 1973

FROM : Richard B. Scott, DP *RS*

SUBJECT: USAID Responsibilities for the Shamalan Situation

In my past memos I have been hard on HAVA, its leadership, and their handling of the social aspects of the Shamalan Project. In this I will be hard on our (USAID) handling of the same project, the recent results of which should have come as a surprise to no one. Hindsight is always 20/20.

To begin, the feasibility study for the project was basically technical. The social feasibility, which is probably always the most crucial in such innovative projects, was not carefully considered. As far as I can tell there were no built in mechanisms which allowed USAID even an official monitoring element of the social aspects, all of which were left in the hands of HAVA. This becomes clear in our requests to attend HAVA-farmer meetings. At the planning stages, there apparently was little thought given to the expectations of Title IX.

We have consistently allowed the information and public relations aspects of the project to remain in HAVA hands which consistently have used traditional approaches in these areas. And we have been convinced, apparently, that their methods work or that we should not be involved in such relations. An important point is that the project as designed is not traditionally oriented but very innovative. Innovative projects succeed, if at all, using equally innovative methods of implementation. The Shamalan project depended on a high level of farmer cooperation which was never achieved. Government - farmer cooperation is basic innovation from the traditional more distant untrusting relationship. Traditional methods of manipulation rather than cooperation cannot hope to succeed with the expected results. Unless cooperation and trust by the farmer can be established, the project, given the land tenure patterns and social structure, cannot be implemented outside an absolutely authoritarian approach which neither USAID nor HAVA are willing to consider or capable of using.

We have been reminded recently that the RGA was not pressured into the Shamalan Project. Yet we are also reminded that the governor of the time was perhaps pressured out because of his unwillingness to push the project



through. Further, I suggest the letter of March 1971, in which the present governor stated that all the details for the implementation of the project were prepared and HAVA ready to act, was not written by him. Certainly he agreed by his signature but agreement, and the understanding of the implications and ability to implement such an innovative project are not the same. It is like the general farmer agreement HAVA officials can get on various aspects of the project but about which the farmers have no detailed knowledge when questioned. I suggest here that HAVA was sucked into the project primarily by their desire for the new equipment associated with it without fully appreciating the attached expectations of full implementation.

While leaving the social implications of the Shamalan Project in the hands of HAVA, which they insist upon, we might cite it as an example of the new more "collaborative style" being written about today.* It also points up the possible error in the basic assumption behind this style: that HAVA with its U.S. trained leadership has the same values, orientations and approaches to problems as USAID. They do not. Certainly they are aware of our views. We are not as aware of theirs.

HAVA is an Afghan organization which must function within the framework of the local socio-political structure of the Helmand Valley and within the broader national and bureaucratic frames. The governor is part of the system and he must attempt to meet its expectations. Although he has some freedom of action he cannot, does not and will not act independently.

Until basic institutional changes occur that insure something other than the traditional relationship between government and locals, (and this does not mean simply a repetition of the key phrases our counterparts have learned in their U.S. training that imply a non-traditional approach) we must be very wary of repeating the collaborative style followed in the Shamalan.

Recent events in the Shamalan will have long term negative effects on USAID-HAVA relations. Probably the most important thing that can come out of the situation now is an understanding of the context and the events leading up to the problem, with an eye to block recurrence.

* "Collaborative style" might be defined roughly as bi-lateral loan situations in which USAID has allowed host country institutions undirected authority in the implementation of loans and grants, e.g. implementation of the Turkey poppy program.