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USAID/AFGHANISTAN PROGRAM  
REASSESSMENT AND REDESIGN



INTRODUCTION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

هيئة انكشاف بين المللي اضلاع موحدة امريكا  
كابل افغانستان

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

دفتر رئيس

JUN 1 1974

Mr. Alfred D. White  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
for Asia  
Agency for International Development  
Washington, D. C. 20523

Dear Al:

Enclosed are a series of papers which describe in some detail the process the Mission has gone through in recent months in its review of ongoing projects and in its plan for conforming to the new legislation. A series of events and factors coinciding in FY 74 led us to decide to reassess the total spectrum of activities engaged in by USAID/A. The more important of these were:

1. The Afghan coup in July 1973 with the hiatus in project activity and the GOA reassessment of foreign assistance which followed.
2. The new Foreign Assistance legislation passed in 1973.
3. The fact that most ongoing projects were scheduled to terminate in FY 75 or FY 76.
4. Relatively few ongoing projects appeared to have high GOA priority or to be going particularly well.
5. A long history of disappointment with complex/sophisticated projects in Afghanistan and the desirability of using the opportunity presented by the above factors to readdress some activities which were perhaps too long-range.

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Mr. Alfred D. White

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We were further encouraged in our intent to undertake intensive re-evaluation by the Ambassador's concurrence in a joint Embassy/USIS/USAID policy review team's recommendation for an overall reassessment of U.S. activities in Afghanistan. For development projects, this team recommended direct benefit, little-people criteria for defining project desirability (see Kabul 1090). State 072260 indicated Washington concurrence in this careful interpretation and also expressed support for a full review of ongoing projects. In this cable also, development grounds were cited as the only major foreseeable criteria for project continuation.

We have spent many hours attempting to break loose from the "cold war" program carryovers and in trying to determine what changes needed to be made. The materials attached to this memo are the documentary history of that process. To date we have reviewed our ongoing projects and made decisions to terminate several which are marginally attractive for a variety of reasons. We have carefully developed a program strategy and set of project criteria which we believe are consistent with GOA priorities, the new AID legislation and the environment of Afghanistan. We now have fairly firm indications from the GOA on the areas where it would like to have U.S. assistance. The task of developing mutually attractive projects within these areas will be difficult and may take some time.

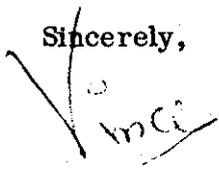
We are satisfied with the progress made to date. We are hopeful that the phase of new project development will be as useful as the earlier phase.\*

I hope these papers will help to explain the seriousness with which we undertook these steps and will outline the logic that was followed.

Needless to say, I would appreciate any comments you may have.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

  
Vincent W. Brown  
Director

Enclosures: a/s

\* We expect to take advantage of AID/W offers of help in this phase by calling on personnel and other resources as appropriate.

**SUMMARY OF  
USAID/A PROGRAM  
ASSESSMENT AND REDESIGN PROCESS**

Over the past several months USAID/Afghanistan has reviewed its entire set of economic assistance activities. The initial stimulus for this review was the Administrator's June 29, 1973 memorandum expressing the urgency of turning "our program in the new directions we have chosen for ourselves." The attached materials document this effort which although still in progress, has moved to the point of outlining possibilities for a new program more in line with GOA and AID priorities.

Volume I contains a number of documents concerned with generating new ideas which were written in direct response to the Administrator's request. However, during the time the materials in Volume I were being prepared, the Afghan coup took place and for several months the USAID's relations with the GOA were minimal. Consequently the USAID marked time and little took place on program reassessment. It was not until late January that further review seemed appropriate. At this time a joint Embassy, USIS, and USAID policy review team (composed of junior officers) recommended a thorough reassessment of all ongoing U.S. programs. The Ambassador and Washington concurred in this recommendation which was at the same time in line with a developing attitude within USAID senior management. As the review began, it was

anticipated by the USAID leadership that the program would be restructured radically, if necessary, to achieve greater project success and to have it better fit the new AID legislation.

Volume II represents the initial round of discussions and thinking about what we "ought to be doing" in Afghanistan. It appeared that President Daoud's interests were very similar to those expressed by the U. S. Congress. There was at the same time a general feeling of a need for more thoughtful programming than had occurred in Afghanistan in the past. With these thoughts in mind, the enclosed project criteria and program strategy paper were drafted by the Director's Advisory Council (DAC). There was a very strong consensus among the DAC members about the direction implied in these two papers.

Both papers represented significant deviations in certain respects from current projects and it was obvious that not all of the Mission staff concurred in what was developing. For that reason, a Mission Seminar on the new legislation was held. This seminar was intentionally designed to be open and controversial. In this way we hoped to get useful new ideas and, to the extent possible, to get the staff "on board" with the new directions.

The Seminar was partially successful; but varied attitudes continued to exist. Simultaneously we undertook, in-house, a complete review of all ongoing projects. With minor exceptions the review took

the form of a formal project-by-project review by the DAC. Volume III is a collection of the papers prepared for the DAC review sessions, the minutes of these sessions and the recommendations and decisions flowing from these reviews.

The above actions were going on in-house. However, the new mandate is for a "collaborative style" and obviously that cannot be done in-house. It was obvious that the program turn-around implied by the new GOA priorities and by the emerging AID focus would require negotiation at the highest level. A plan of action was outlined to the Ambassador in which he generally concurred. The GOA tended to think of foreign assistance in terms of turn-key capital projects and/or foreign advisors doing technical assistance. They were unaware of the new AID emphasis and flexibility. We had an educational task which was undertaken at three levels: a) the Ambassador with top level GOA officials including the President; b) the USAID Director and Deputy with the Minister of Planning and other key development officers; and c) the Program Office with lower levels in the Ministry of Planning. The documents relating to these educational efforts are contained in Volume IV. In general, it has been successful. The GOA (at least some elements) appears to have a quite favorable view of what AID can do for Afghanistan in its new role.

Volume V represents another in-house effort. GOA ideas were beginning to flow in as indicated in Volume IV; but the Afghans had only

nebulous ideas which would take much time to develop. Deadlines for program submissions existed and the technical staff in the Mission was becoming discouraged since certain aspects of the project review process had been negative in nature.

For these reasons it was deemed desirable to form "new project idea task forces." The task forces were formed in such a way as to largely assure that the nebulous thoughts which were beginning to flow from the GOA would be addressed. But, outside of this very general "guidance," the task forces were given maximum freedom.

The task force ideas which appeared attractive after a systematic evaluation, and which were ideas broached by the GOA, were retained and now form the basis for our tentative new program. The only project area retained for active further examination which is not clearly a GOA priority is nutrition, where there is only a developing interest.

Office of Development Planning  
USAID/Afghanistan  
May 25, 1974