

CONFIDENTIAL



NANGRAHAR  
Goshta district.

A contact and assessment mission  
by  
the AFGHAN RELIEF FOUNDATION

July 21 - 24 1989



Report by  
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ARF

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NANGRAHAR (Goshta district) : An ARF contact and assessment mission.

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#### A. BACKGROUND

On July the 7th, a written request was received at the Afghan Relief Foundation's office, signed by the following maleks :

Habib (Abdul) Rahman, Mohammad Akbar, Esmatullah, Mohammad Rahim, Musafir and Mohammad Baz.

In the letter assistance was requested for the reconstruction of houses and irrigation canals, for the rehabilitation of fallow and of flood-prone land, for the repair of water pumps and flour mills, as well as for a school and a clinic.

#### B. OBJECTIVES

- a. To assess the type and degree of destruction of the Khwezi villages in Goshta district ;
- b. to identify the priorities in their reconstruction ;
- c. to identify problems and obstacles in the reconstruction effort ;
- d. to meet villagers, maleks and other authorities in the area ;
- e. to feel the motivation, the initiative and the determinedness of the villagers to reconstruct their own habitat.

#### C. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- a. A clear idea has been obtained of the geographical situation of the area and of the lay out of the agricultural land and of the irrigation canals ;
- b. The repair of the irrigation canals has been established as a priority ;
- c. A first meeting has been held with villagers, maleks, a commander and a tribal chief of the area ;
- e. A first estimation has been made of the requirements for reconstruction of these villages.

## ASSESSMENT

### A. THE AREA AND THE PEOPLE

We are dealing here with 6 villages in the southern part of Goshta district, Nangrahar province.

The villagers belong to the Mohmand tribe, whose territory straddles the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are Pushto speakers.

At present, the villages are almost completely deserted. There are only nomad families camping with their herds under the trees in the area. Some of these nomads belong to the Khuzi tribe, which is related to the Mohmand and who are in the habit of coming to the Kama and the Goshta area in summer time. Most are Charudi people, who are not really related to the settled inhabitants here, and who in free Afghanistan time used to migrate southwards to Zabul. It were the nomads that provided us with food, tea and sleeping cots.

According to the local villagers, they had to take refuge 'en masse' about 7 years ago, under bombardments and heavy attacks. All went so fast that they could take little with them and not even had the time to bury the dead properly.

The majority of the villagers now lives in Munda Camp, close to Shabkader town, on the border of Mohmand Agency in the NWFP Province. Some families stay in Mohmand Agency itself with relatives, and a few are in the Nasr Bagh and the Katchi Kari Camps close to Peshawar.

The Kabul regime had established several posts in and around the villages, among other places in Tor Khel and on the mountain overlooking Warsak village. Their soldiers further looted the houses and sold off the wood.

The government militia also launched attacks on infiltrating mujahedin in the mountains on the border through which we also came. Repeatedly helicopters threw anti-personnel mines on these tracks. This has not been the case anymore since last fall, and the villagers estimated that the mines left would now be out of working order. The path we followed was clear anyway. There seemed to be no problem of mines around the villages themselves.

The villages were liberated, apparently without too heavy fighting, in the fall of 1988, when the government troops withdrew from Turkham.

The six villages together are known as the 'Khwezi' area. To the northwest of it, about 30 minutes walking from Yacub Khel, are some villages around the district headquarters of Goshta. This is known as 'Beyazi' area. Apparently, or according to the Khwezi villagers, several families from the Beyazi area joined the government militia. The land over there was said to have been owned by a few big landholding families, one of which at least also joined the government. Some houses in the

Beyazi area were deserted and damaged. These were houses of government militia people who fled, and whose houses were looted by mujahedin. On the whole, the Beyazi area seems more alive, with many fields cultivated and irrigation canals still in working order. The precise complex relationships of the Khwezi and the Beyazi villagers could not be investigated in such a short time. But it is worth pointing out that the entrance of the main, river-fed, Khwezi irrigation canal, lies on Beyazi land, and the canal follows the river closely for about 1 km before it turns inland into Khwezi land. Undoubtedly there were also many commercial and administrative contacts between the two areas.

The battle around Samarkhel, a few kilometers east of Jallalabad, is no more than 25 kms. away. The sound of the artillery and occasional bombing could be heard in the distance. Reconnaissance planes or fighter planes overflew Goshta district every day, but on a very high altitude. Only the morning after we had crossed the border and were still approaching the Khwezi area, one plane dropped 6 bombs from very high. It is not excluded that there are government spies on the other side of the border in Mohmand Agency, who announce when groups of mujahedin seem to be moving in.

The majority of the villagers was said to belong to MAHAZ/NIFA party, although some families have joined other parties.

## B. THE TARGET AREA

The six villages together are known as 'Khwezi' :

<u>Village</u>	<u>Malek</u>	<u>Estimated number of families</u>
Tor Khel	Habib Abdul Rahman	800 / 900
Daphta Khel	Mohd. Rahim Din and/or Shina Khan s/o Safdar Khan	600
Yacuk Khel	Mohd. Drey	400 / 500
Aka Khel	Musafer	400 / 500
Warsak	Mohd. Baz	400
Ghaga	Esmatullah Khan	200

Note : In the written request of July 7th, there also appears the name of a malek Mohammad Akbar. This man should be identified.

According to the information provided, the total number of families is between 2800 and 3100.

There used to be several shops, mostly in the adjoining villages of Tor Khel, Daphta Khel and Yacuk Khel. Together they constituted what was known as the 'Khwezi bazaar'. But none exist anymore now.

We are dealing here with concentrated settlements. The villages are situated about 10 minutes walking from the Kabul river, on the border between the irrigated and the rain-fed lands. The total area is about 100 square kilometers (rough estimate) of which maybe 15% formerly was irrigated land. Crops produced were wheat, barley, rice, corn, sugarcane. There are also some fruit trees.

### C. THE NEEDS

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Currently village life has stopped completely :

- houses have been destroyed or damaged and looted ;
- wells in the houses have not been cleaned for several years ;
- the irrigation canals are overgrown with reeds or dry and not maintained ;
- the entrance to the 2 main river-fed irrigation canals is seriously eroded or has been partially washed away ;
- the formerly irrigated fields are lying dry ;
- some fields are overgrown with low bushes, others however are covered entirely with dense, two-meter high grasses ;
- the closest branch of the Kabul river has shifted eastwards over the year, cutting off some land that formerly belonged to the shore and has now become an isle ;
- these isles in the river where formerly wheat was grown, are also completely covered with wild grasses (tapu) ;
- the rain-fed land, where one wheat crop per year was grown, is still terraced ; some jeribs seem to have been cultivated this year, but most land looks deserted ; the small dams and drainage canals to control the spring and summer floods have been washed away ;
- sugar cane presses are destroyed ;
- bigger wells, operated by oxen or with waterpumps, are lying dry ;
- the waterpumps are out of order, the oxen have been sold or eaten ;
- a few flour mills are out of order ;
- the villagers used to have a few tractors, but these were taken by the government.

At present there is no shelter.  
 There is no food production.  
 There is no labour available.  
 There is no farm power.  
 There is no trade.

#### D. TASKS TO BE CARRIED OUT

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##### a. Irrigation canals :

- cleaning, deepening, remaking walls ;
- reinforce the entrance and the river bank ;
- pipelines in a few flood-prone passages ;
- clean springs.

##### b. Agricultural land :

- cleaning of heavy overgrowth ;
- plowing ;
- sowing, eventually also fertilizer ;
- make flood control dams and drainage canals.

##### c. House repair :

- repair of the mud walls ;
- repair of the roofs ;
- cleaning of the individual wells.

##### d. Technical equipment :

- repair sugar cane presses ;
- repair or buy new flour mills ;
- repair or buy new water pumps.

Discussing this with some villagers, it was quickly obvious to everybody, that the priority should be the repair of the irrigation canals. Added to this we can take into consideration the repair of a few houses (shelter for the labour force) and the cleaning of some wells (clean water for the labour force).

There are three types of land : abi - land : irrigated

lalmi-land : rainfed

tapu-land : the growth covered isles between the river-branches.

∴ The priority is evidently the rehabilitation of the irrigated land.

## E. INPUTS REQUIRED

### a. Labour force

At present the villages are empty. The villagers are willing to provide the labour. In principle, people will work on the irrigation canals that water their land. Malek Musafer has been in charge of the maintenance and repair of the irrigation canals before. He seems able to command and organize such a labour force. His estimation of the needed labour input is as follows :

<u>Canal</u>	<u>Number of People</u>	<u>Time-span</u>
Canal 1 (river)	300	3 to 4 months (90 to 120 days)
Canal 2 (river)	150	3 to 4 months (90 to 120 days)
Canal 3 (spring)	100-150	2 months (60 days)
Canal 4 (spring)	100-150	2 months (60 days)

The labour force needed -only for the repair of the irrigation canals - is thus estimated to be between 650 and 750 people.

If we take into account this minimum and maximum numbers and allow for the variations in time-required, we can estimate the required amount of man/workdays for the repair of the irrigation canals as follows :

Canal 1	: 27.000	-	36.000	man/workdays
Canal 2	: 14.850	-	18.000	
Canal 3	: 6.000	-	9.000	
Canal 4	: 6.000	-	9.000	
	<u>53.850</u>		<u>72.000</u>	

All these people have to eat. Based on a ratio of 3 man cooking personnel per 50 workers, we should add 40 to 45 cooks (for a work force between 650 and 750 people). For an average of 3 months work, this gives us  $45 \times 90 = 4050$  additional workdays. With the cooks the total workforce amounts to 700 or 800 people.

The estimated total amount of man/workdays needed becomes between 58.000 and 76.000.

### b. Tools

Tools needed for their work will be shovels, pickaxes, buckets, wheelbarrows, stone-hammers, hammers and saws, scythes... . Malek Musafer proposed himself to reinforce the riverbanks at the entrance of their main irrigation canals by wire baskets filled with stones. Such are used in Pakistan and apparently also have been used by the people from the Beyazi area to the north of the Khwezi villages. Such wire baskets can be purchased in Pakistan. Estimated need : about 2000 pieces. But apart from their purchasing cost, we then should also consider their transportation cost.

### c. Food

Since there is no local food production, such a labour force cannot be kept working unless food is brought in from outside. The kind and quantity needed for this were not yet discussed.

### d. Animal and mechanical power

Some oxen were requested, e.g. for hauling heavy objects during the cleaning of the irrigation canals.

Tractors were also requested

- to haul cartloads of stones from the mountains, to be used to reinforce the river bank
- to plow the land that has been lying fallow for several years and that is now too difficult for oxen to plow.

### e. Wages

The villagers expressed their concern over the fact that their families will remain in Pakistan while they work on the reconstruction of their habitat. These families have to be maintained. The UNHCR food rations, in practice, are not sufficient, and they cannot be obtained for free. Many villagers therefore now work on farms in Pakistan. They are being paid wages between 30 Rs. (for ordinary farmwork) and 40 Rs (for heavy work such as canal-cleaning) per day.

When they come to work in Afghanistan, they will lose this income. They hope a wage will be provided to them as a substitute.

If we consider the same wage scales, we can here make a rough estimate of the amount of money involved, to pay wages :

58.000 man/workdays x 40 Rs. = 2.320.000 Rs.

76.000 man/workdays x 40 Rs. = 3.040.000 Rs.

### f. Transport

Tools and food will have to be brought in from Pakistan.

If we simply consider, for the sake of the exercise only, an amount of 3 kg of wheat per man/workday, then we arrive already at :

58.000 x 3 = 174.000 kg or 174 tonnes or 9 trucks of 20 tonnes ;

76.000 x 3 = 228.000 kg or 228 tonnes or 12 trucks of 20 tonnes.

In reality of course, more transport will be required.

### g. Seed and fertilizer

These will be needed once the irrigation canals can be restored, and once the land has been cleared and plowed. This however will not be before the summer of 1990.



## F. LOGISTICS

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The primary access road before jehad was via Turkham and across the Kabul river at the bridge at Behsud, close to Jallalabad. This road then splits in the Kama area, one branch going northeast into Kunar, the other southeast to Goshta. In Khwezi, the dirt road again would split, one branch going to the mountain gorge through which we entered from Mohmand Agency, and one branch apparently going to the northside of the Kabul river at the height of Lalpur.

Given the battle around Jallalabad, access via the bridge at Behsud should currently be considered impossible.

Alternative access roads are :

1. By truck via Turkham to Lalpur. There it seems possible to cross the river by boat, although the freight will have to be unloaded and loaded again. Then by road to Khwezi.
2. By truck via Turkham to Chahardeh/Chardi village on the huge Gayazabad farm domain. Chahardeh village is at the height of the Khwezi villages. Unload and bring across the river by small boats.
3. By truck via the Nawa Pass into Kunar, then descend to Kama and there the road to Goshta.
4. By truck to Mohmand agency. Then by tractor and with donkeys across the border and to the Khwezi villages.

The problems with each access road :

1. Lalpur : What is the price of unloading and loading at the river, of shipping the freight and the truck to the other side ? Can a truck be brought across the river, or should others wait on the other side ? If a truck can be brought over, what size or weight maximally ? Is there storage capacity on the other side of the river ? How much, and for what price ?  
 Since this is a strategic area, just beyond Turkham and on the main road to Jallalabad, what kind of security problems is one likely to encounter ? Air attacks from the Kabul troops ? Ground attacks from other tribes, parties, commanders ?
2. Chahardeh/Gayazabad : How good is the road from the GT main road to Chahardeh village ? What are the problems and possibilities to cross the river here ?  
 An advantage is the presence of a flour mill in the village, and the fact that the Khwezi villagers can help crossing the river.  
 The security problems are the same as for Lalpur. Who controls Gayazabad farm ? Danger of air attacks and conflicts with other tribes or mujahedin.
3. Nawa Pass : The major advantage is that the trucks go all the way to Goshta, without having to cross the Kabul river. What, however, are the security risks in Kunar, and especially in the Kama area, which is close to Jallalabad and where air attacks are very likely.

4. Mohmand Agency : The advantage is that one crosses the border and moves into Afghanistan all the time in Mohmand territory. Across the mountains, there are not even Pakistani checkpoints. On the other hand trucks cannot go very far. Transport by tractor and by donkey will be long, slow and very expensive. Thus, whereas security is heightened, the practical organization of the transport is much more cumbersome and its cost much higher.

On the whole, security and cost factors will have to be weighed against each other.

## ADDITIONAL ENQUIRIES TO BE MADE

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### A. COST ESTIMATIONS

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1. A survey has to be made concerning the differential costs and security risks for the three access routes by truck : Lalpur, Gayazabad and the Nawa Pass.
2. Prices have to be obtained of farm tools, from different suppliers.  
The price has also to be obtained of the wire baskets for riverside works.
3. The price has to be obtained of oxen, preferably in the Mohmand Agency area, to ensure climatic adaptation.
4. Prices have to be obtained from different dealers of tractors, preferably the FIAT type, in different models. Also of tractor carts of different sizes.

### B. COORDINATION

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1. The ARF has to start participating in the Nangrahar regional coordination meetings.
2. Enquiries have to be made about how other agencies handled the reconstruction of areas where no local labour force was present, and therefore had to be completely supported.

### C. CONTACT WITH POTENTIAL DONORS

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1. Help the Afghans Foundation : This foundation has already approved 25.000 US dollars for a food-for-work project by the ARF.
2. Rural Assistance Program.
3. FAO : Funds for the purchase of farm tools, oxen, tractors.
4. World Food Program : Food-for-work wheat.

POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED IN MORE DETAIL WITH THE VILLAGERS

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1. The number of jeribs of rainfed and irrigated land per village.
2. The food needs for one labourer per day (kind and quantity).
3. How many and which tools will they provide themselves.
4. The possibility that each man brings one or two tools to Khwezi, on foot, to save on transport.
5. Storage possibilities in Khwezi of food supplies (repair some buildings ?)
6. Possible assistance with the loading of trucks in Peshawar, and with the unloading somewhere near Goshta.
7. The daily wage amount.
8. The allocation of oxen.
9. The allocation of one or two tractors, on which basis, what will be the rent per hour, who will pay for the driver, for the repairs, for the diesel ?
10. Administration : lists of families, of labourers and of days worked ;  
                                   lists of tools allocated, of expenses incurred.

It was observed that a firm 'administration' was kept about the weapons borrowed and returned, and that each person was held individually responsible for the weapon he received.

It was also observed that a decision, made by several tribal authorities, concerning an intra-tribal conflict, was put down on paper in three copies. One copy for each conflicting party, and one copy for the tribal authority.

Given these practices, it seems acceptable to demand a strict administration of all external inputs provided. This will have to be discussed and responsible administrators will have to be chosen.

11. The repair of the water pumps and the flour mills. Can they do it themselves ?

## THE INTEREST OF THE PROJECT

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The Khwezi area seems a potentially very interesting site for village reconstruction for three reasons :

### a. Humanitarian need

The needs and priorities of different districts and sub-districts in Afghanistan can vary wildly. Aid is not always provided there where the need is obviously the greatest, and this for all sorts of practical, political and economic reasons. It is for example, easier and cheaper to support areas where the people are still present and where their agricultural production has suffered but has not stopped altogether, than to support areas where everybody has left and there is no agricultural production at all. Certain areas, which are relatively well-off, compared to others, will also receive assistance precisely because agricultural production has not suffered all too much, and because they potentially can grow a surplus, thus boosting overall national production. The Khwezi area clearly does not belong to this latter category. It has suffered heavily, and reconstruction more or less has to start from scratch.

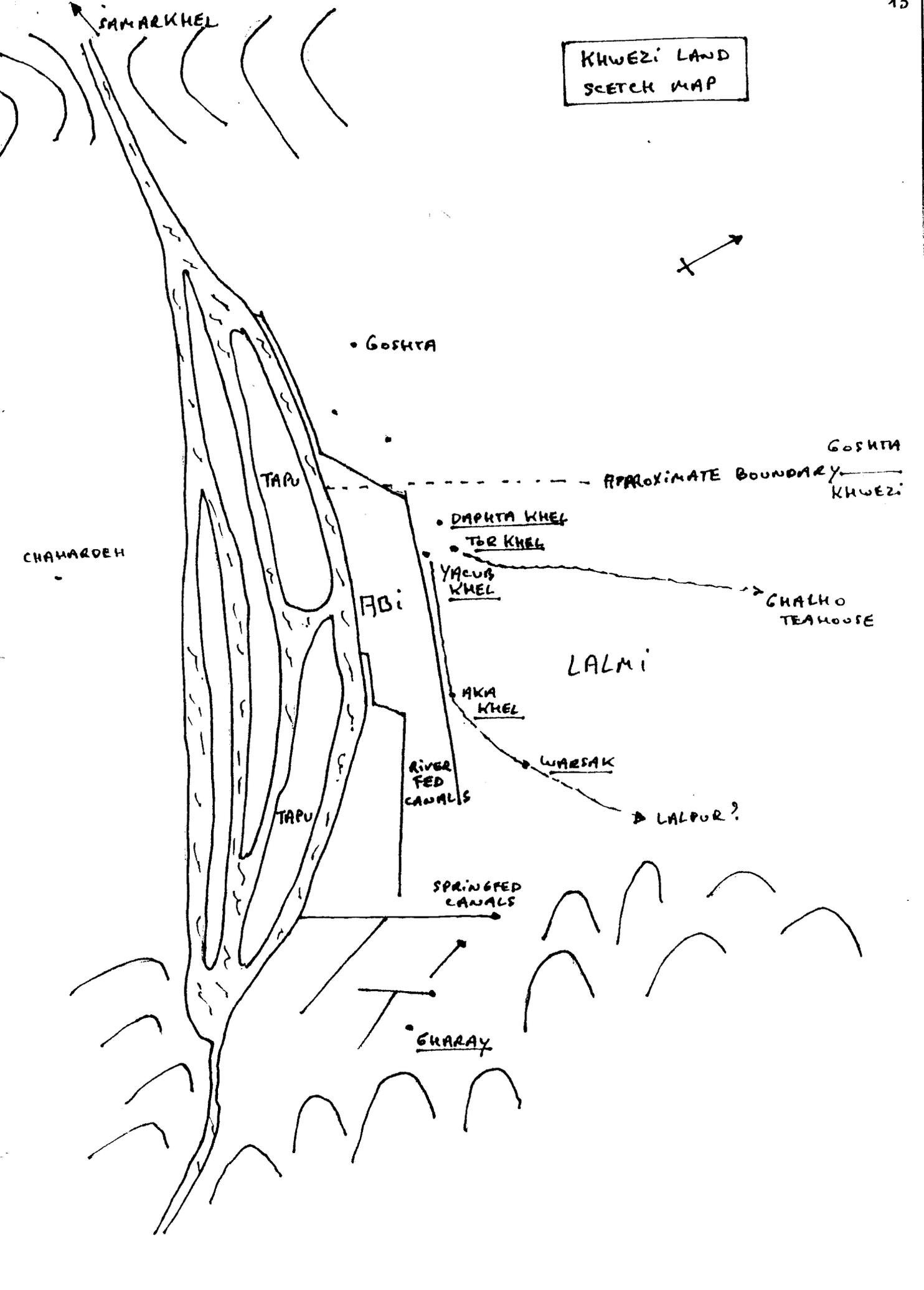
### b. Motivation and determinedness of the villagers

Interestingly enough, it were the maleks of the villages that send out the request for assistance. The people who accompanied the ARF field team again were maleks and ordinary villagers. On several occasions they stressed that they wanted to come back, if possible, all together, the way they had had to leave so many years ago. Discussing the risk of bomb attacks which such a concentrated workforce of men, they acknowledged the risk but also stated clearly that it would not prevent them from trying to reconstruct their habitat. All in all, although we must foresee here a project that probably will take up to 3 years, the prospect is that of no less than 3000 families returning, which may be worth the investment.

### c. Organizational development of an Afghan NGO.

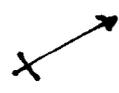
So far the Afghan Relief Foundation has run a school and a clinic for Afghans in Pakistan. Inside Afghanistan, their only experience is with food distribution programs which are comparatively easy. The present project is much more complex and will require a better administration, a better accounting system and a better management and reporting. A French NGO, AVICEN, is providing this administrative and management support to the ARF. The project would definitely also be a tremendous learning experience for the ARF people. If relief and aid agencies and their donors are really interested in helping the Afghans help themselves, then this should be a serious argument in favor of the project.

KHWEZI LAND  
SCETCH MAP



SAMARKHEL

KHWEZI LAND  
SCETCH MAP



• GOSHTA

GOSHTA

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY  
KHWEZI

CHAMARDEH

TAPU

• DAPHTA KHEL

• TOR KHEL

• YACUB KHEL

CHALHO  
TEAHOUSE

ABi

LALMI

• AKA KHEL

• WARSAK

RIVER  
FED  
CANALS

• LALPUR?

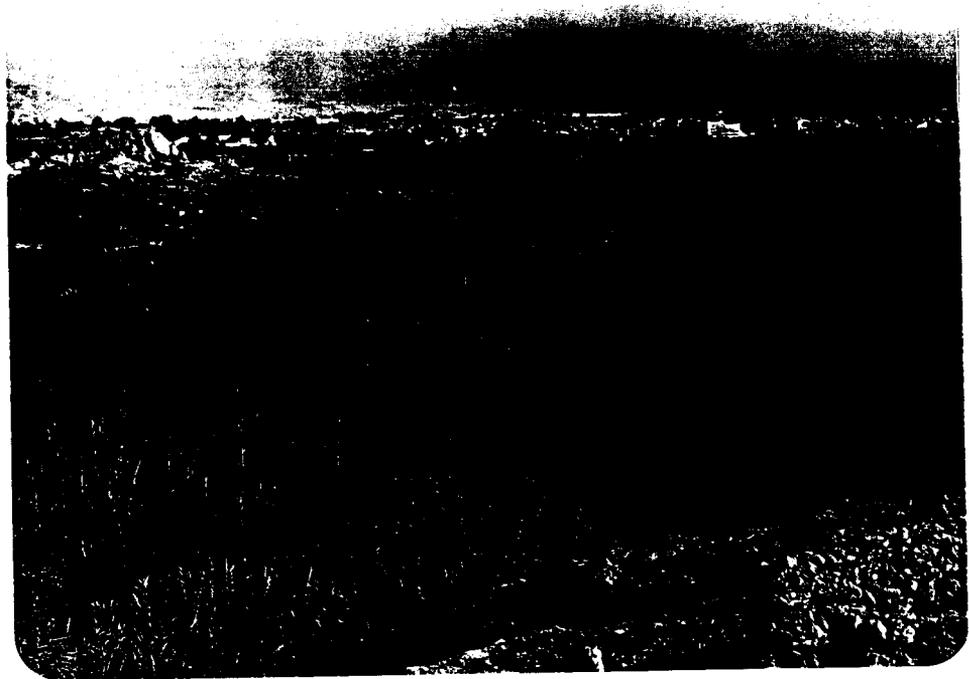
TAPU

SPRING FED  
CANALS

• GHARAY

THE KHWEZI VILLAGES (Nangrahar province, Goshta district)

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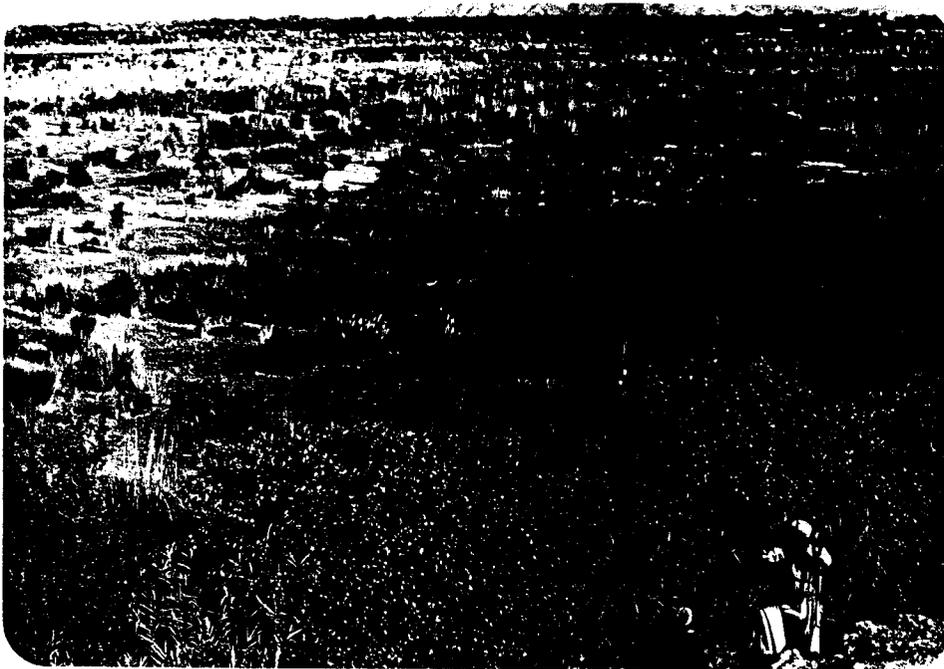
On the background, to the left Aka Kheh and to the right Warsak village.  
On the foreground, wild grasses that cover fields once irrigated by a  
spring-fed canal.



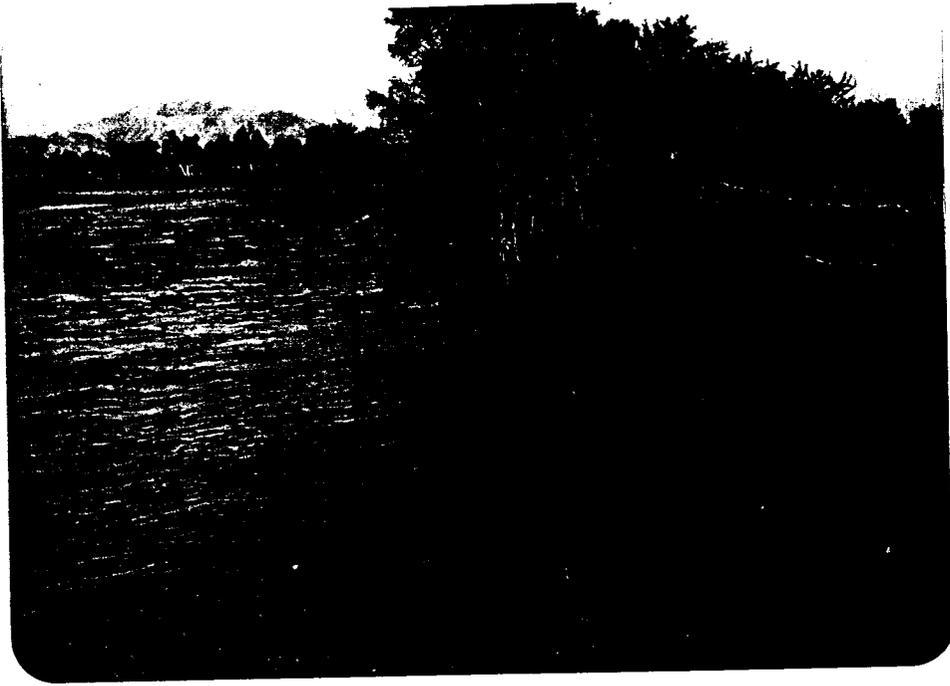
An enormous bombcrater  
in AkaKheh village.



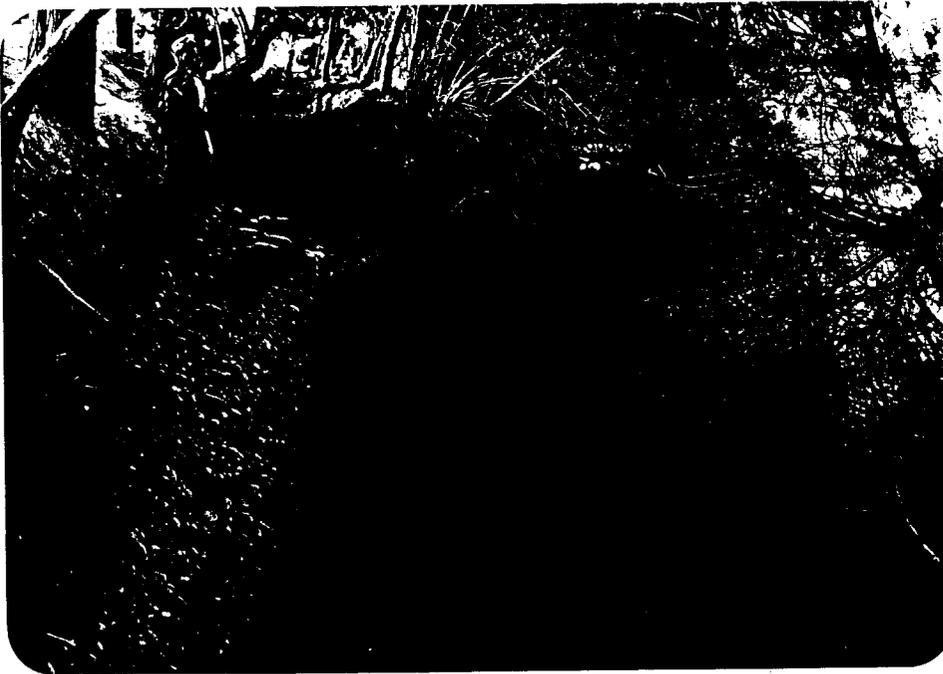
The main, river-fed, irrigation canal on the foreground. It is dry and needs cleaning and repair.



The southern Khwezi area. Uncultivated fields. The Kabul river runs to the left.



For reasons of land-rights or gravity, the two river-fed irrigation canals run along the Kabul river for several hundred meters.



This makes them vulnerable to erosion of the riverbank.



Wild growth covers formerly irrigated "abi" land.



Rain-fed fields ("lalmi") provide an important wheat crop once a year. Here the problem is flood control.

