REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

of

PAKTYKA & GHAZNI SMU

10th September - 10th October 1990

Mohammed Ahmed Mao-
Michael Day-Thompson
Peshawar
21st October 1990
PREFACE

This report and the recommendations contained in it, follow from revisions made to the earlier SMU report circulated and discussed in Islamabad on 14th and 15th October 1990.

For the reader who is seeking greater detail of the day-to-day progress of the mission, it may be helpful to study both reports in conjunction.

Peshawar
21st October 1990
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1 OVERVIEW

The recommendations in this report are made as a result of the UNOCA-staffed SMU which worked throughout Paktyka and some areas of Ghazni from 10 SEP 90 to 10 OCT 90. The mission consisted of two internationals, an interpreter and a driver—both Afghan nationals employed by UNOCA. It also enjoyed the presence and assistance of the RIFA-employed office supervisor for Paktyka and Ghazni, an Afghan national with wide knowledge and relationships in the area.

Contrary to expectations raised by security reports circulating in Peshawar and Islamabad, the SMU found a generally stable situation in Paktyka which permitted travel without escort in all areas of the province, provided certain common-sense procedures and protocol were followed. This is outlined in 2. below.

Initial reception of the SMU by shuras, whilst maintaining the high standards of Pathan hospitality to guests, was sharply critical of the UN failure to implement earlier promises. It should be explained that, in the Pathan perception, an agreement to consider a proposal is taken as tantamount to a promise to carry it out, unless it is very clearly stated that no undertaking has been made.

It also became clear to the SMU that earlier missions had had the effect of creating expectations of assistance which had not previously existed in the minds of the people. The consequence had been that the climate had changed from an acceptance of the inevitability of self-help to one of dependency and waiting for large-scale assistance to arrive.

After listening to the criticism and apologising for past misunderstandings, the SMU suggested, in each case, a new approach based on rehabilitation work to be implemented under shura-directed arrangements, paid for by UN-supplied wheat. This process is described in 4. below.

The enforced early termination of the SMU's mission and its withdrawal across the border has had the unfortunate effect of leaving final arrangements for implementation of its proposals in the air, except in Zarghun Shah where works is well under way: although no formal agreement has yet been signed.

If circumstances permit a return to Paktyka and Ghazni before the winter makes access impossible, it is vital that the agreed tonnages of wheat-for-work be delivered and the appropriate agreements between UN and shuras signed. At very least, UNOCA should make every effort to assure the shuras, through contacts in Peshawar, that any delay is not of our own making and that service will be resumed as soon as possible.
2 SECURITY

The SMU found a generally stable security situation in Paktyka. The only exceptions consisted in a number of checkpoints where tolls are demanded, set up on main access routes by isolated commanders. However, within the province there is a firm move towards the authority of district shuras and away from the previously autonomous power of the commanders. Indeed, in the last days of the mission, the Urgun shura was active in discouraging the continued activities of these checkpoints between Angurada - at the border - and Urgun.

The key to security of movement lies in observing the following rules:

- Before entering Paktyka, contact Moulvi Arsalah's representatives in Peshawar to discuss the mission. They will pass the word to Urgun that the mission is coming and should be protected.
- Just before arriving at Angurada, call at their post at Bagher as a matter of courtesy.
- On arrival at each main destination, visit the representatives of the shura without delay, explaining the purpose of the mission's presence and its plans for travel.
- Continue to liaise with the shuras throughout the mission, reporting any problems encountered.

Provided this procedure is adhered to, no major security problems should arise and an increasing atmosphere of normality will be achieved. The important points to remember is that the UN are guests in the area, an important concept in Pathan culture; and that the advice of the shura leaders should be accepted on where assistance may be appropriately given. For instance, we suggested, at one point, that wheat might be given to a certain commander who was carrying out maintenance work on the road between Urgun and Angurada. The shura advised against this, asserting that the work came under their jurisdiction and that any separate deals would undermine their authority while, at the same time, leading to further claims for assistance by free-lance commanders who might set up private projects along the route. Naturally, the SMU accepted this advice.

In summary, it may be fairly asserted that most of the security problems encountered in the past, apart from those at the hands of the border Waziri, have been due to errors of procedure and planning on the part of the UN and other agencies. Failure to understand and observe the normal courtesies described above, made worse by sending assistance through as yet un-assisted areas, has resulted in incidents of detention of personnel and hi-jacking of goods which need never have occurred.
3 WORK THROUGH THE SHURAS

3.1 Method

In discussions of the assistance programme with the shuras, the SMU encountered a continuous and strong criticism of one aspect of the programme to date: the perception that funds given for the reconstruction of Afghanistan are largely being spent in Pakistan. There was sharp criticism of the funding and use of Peshawar-based NGOs — particularly the Afghan variety; of the administrative overheads and transport costs of these operations; of the policy of purchasing materials in Pakistan which are available in Afghanistan; and of the tendency to employ people from the refugee community rather than people from the communities within the province.

The SMU found that many of the NGO-implemented projects were inadequately managed and monitored - to say the least. In the case of NGOs managed by international staff in Peshawar, many had never been visited by those responsible for planning the projects. In the case of Afghan-managed NGO projects, the management presence on site was spasmodic. The outcome is that projects fail to achieve the desired standard of results and the shuras and people are deeply critical of the UN.

The SMU therefore looked for other means to carry out projects which would circumvent these failings. The solution seemed to be the use of shuras as implementing partners. By proceeding in this way, the shura becomes responsible for the satisfactory quality of the work, the UN for the logistical, material and financial support.

By entering into a working partnership with the shuras, in which the UN provides the basic means - wheat, until funds are available - and the shura organises the provision of local materials and labour, it is not only possible to achieve satisfactory project completion but, at the same time, reinforce the status of the district shuras as the basis on which the infrastructure of the province and the country may be re-built. This last appears to coincide happily with the reported viewpoint of the recent jirga of mujahideen leaders held at Sho-e-Salim.

3.2 Agreement

Of course, the bureaucratic processes of the UN require some formal agreement between the two parties in regard to these shura-managed projects. This has to be treated with sensitivity, as the spoken word of a Pathan is his bond. A simple form of agreement has therefore been designed and forms Annex A to this report. It is accompanied by an additional sheet: a schedule of works to be carried out and a schedule of wheat to be made available for the project, showing monetary equivalents; at current market rates, in Afis, Rupees and US Dollars.

The implementing shura will be able to use the wheat in payment of labour; or as an incentive for work to be done (see next paragraph); or to monetize part of it to purchase materials.
In the case of Zarghun Shah, were work is already in process on the cleaning of one hundred karez, the *shura* evolved their own solution whereby each group of karez owners/users were given an initial amount of 550 seer of wheat to start work, on the agreement that they would complete the process at their own expense. This is seen as illustrative of the will and initiative of the people, provided the aid community does not deter them with indications of mega-dollars in the offing.

### 3.3 Monitoring

While the main responsibility for satisfactory supervision and management of these projects would rest with the *shura*, the UN, as partners, would have a monitoring responsibility in relation to the satisfactory use of donated resources and funds. Therefore, regular monitoring and evaluation of individual projects and the programme in general must be carried out by the UN team responsible for assistance activities in the province.

Satisfactory performance would be the criterion for the approval of additional project proposals by the *shura*.

### 3.4 Management Training

Although the institution of the *shura* is essentially and traditionally a group representing the various tribal interests in the area, there is evidence to show that they are also organised on a more practical administrative basis, partly out of the necessity created by absence of any centralised authority. For instance, the head of the Zarghun Shah district *shura* was able to show the SMU a well-defined organisogram of the sectoral responsibilities of his inner *shura* members.

Nevertheless, if they are to respond to the bureaucratic procedures of required by the UN, it will be necessary to offer them some facility in management training. This will have the added benefit of formalising their ability to plan and manage in the future. Again, it is worth noting the reported intentions emanating from the deliberations of the Sho-e-Salim *jirga* in this respect.

It is suggested that urgent consideration be given to setting up such a facility, preferably within the province. The NGO IRC currently run such a training course for Paktiya in Kurram Agency and could be asked to extend their work for Paktyka. Failing which, an approach could be made to ILO.
4 WHEAT FOR WORK

4.1 Determining Projects

Deciding which project proposals warrant priority would be the joint task of the UN team in the province and the shura proposing the projects.

4.2 Deciding How Much Wheat

The amount of wheat to be made available would depend on the work to be carried out. The alternative would be to make an amount of wheat available, depending on the size and condition of the district - as in the case of Zarghun Shah - leaving the shura to determine with the local people how the work might be achieved, given this resource. Each situation and location may offer its own problems and solutions: the temptation to over-standardise the approach should be resisted. UN personnel should try to see it through local perceptions.

4.3 Shuras as Banker & Paymaster

Having been given the agreed quantity of wheat, the shura should be left with the responsibility of safe-guarding it and disbursing it.

The UN should provide and pay for, in each case, a storeman responsible for the proper storage of stocks as well as accounting for amounts received and disbursed in cooperation with the shura. His work would be subject to UN monitoring.
5 RE-BUILDING THE ECONOMY

5.1 Re-building Productive Capacity

The reconstruction process will call for considerable quantities of construction materials. Whilst these could be purchased from across the border in Pakistan, it offers an excellent opportunity to re-build the local economy and increase long-term employment opportunities if facilities for the manufacture of such items as bricks and concrete products can be set up locally.

The SMU has already contacted, through the Urgun shura, an Afghan citizen with considerable experience of kiln-fired brick making in Pakistan, who is keen to re-start in Paktyka. His initial plans are modest but could be expanded by an interest-free short-term loan from UN.

In the same way, the SMU is currently seeking Afghans working in Pakistan who have the skills needed to set up a plant or plants manufacturing concrete artifacts such as well-liners, roof slabs, latrine bases and roofing beams.

There is also a strong need for mechanics and workshop facilities to repair the many trucks, tractors, pumps and other mechanical devices in the various districts.

As people begin to lay aside their guns - or maybe to encourage them to do so - the restoration of local 'cottage' industry is important and should be encouraged with UN assistance. In addition to the items mentioned above, the Zarghun Shah shura instanced carpet-making, carpentry, metal work and animal husbandry as areas for rehabilitation of employment.

5.2 Training

Revival of local industry and productive capacity after so many years of warfare, will call for realistic investment in training programmes. All education - whether technical or academic - has been neglected during the period of the Jihad. It is now an urgent priority. The ILO and donor countries should be requested to find ways of meeting this need.

5.3 In-country Procurement

It has already been noted that procurement of supplies outside Afghanistan does little to benefit or re-build the country's economy.

The SMU remarked on the availability of such building supplies as concrete and good quality corrugated iron sheets during their journeys through Paktyka and Ghazni. There is open trading between Kabul and Ghazni evidenced by the heavy traffic along the Kabul-Kandahar Highway and the ready availability of Russian-made goods in the bazaars.
It is urged that consideration be given to local purchase, even if there is a disadvantageous price differential between buying in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In any case, such difference would probably be removed by the transport costs to bring materials across the border.

The beneficial effect on the Afghan economy would be considerable.
6 PRIORITIES BEYOND SHURA CAPABILITY

6.1 Roads

There are some priorities which lie beyond the immediate capabilities of the shuras but without which a sustained return of the refugees is unlikely. One of these is the rehabilitation of the road network.

The main Kabul-Kandahar Highway has been badly damaged by war. As has been noted, it is currently in heavy use and the damage becomes worse each day.

Most of the roads which feed from this main route out to the provinces and districts were the subject of mining during the war. Many remain to be cleared but the work is continuing. This means that nearly all traffic is obliged to proceed over desert tracks and along rocky river beds. The effect is that speeds are minimal and wear and tear on vehicles excessive. It also means that vehicles cannot move after heavy rain or during the winter snows.

The rehabilitation of roads is obviously a priority. Yet the current projects are puny and unrealistic in the extreme. The shovels and local tractors must be supplemented with heavy road making plant if results are to obtained in an acceptable timeframe. Even then, the job is going to be long and arduous. Repair of disabled equipment left behind by the Russians would be a start. This would have to be backed up by training of local operators. In parallel with this, heavy equipment should be purchased or requested as donations from countries able to help. Road-building expertise should also be incorporated in the UN's strategy, as has been the case with mine-clearance.

6.2 Healthcare

Another facility which has fallen into total neglect during the war years is the healthcare. The SMU found that, contrary to the various data-bases and maps which they had been shown in Peshawar, the active healthcare presence furnished by agencies in Paktyka was extremely limited as well as largely under-supplied and under-directed.

The register of out-patients in the Urgun Hospital - currently under reconstruction by IMC - reveals that far the greatest part of those attending are males between 16 and 40 years old. This means that women and children - who cannot trek to the hospital from outlying areas and are anyhow inhibited from attending a male-run clinic by local custom - are without medical help.

There is an urgent need for WHO and UNICEF to combine to design and provide a realistic healthcare outreach system that will cover this need.

Apart from the urgent need of the population already in the country, it is unlikely that refugees - who have become used to the availability of healthcare in the camps - will willingly return to such a situation.
6.3 Education

The other service which has virtually disappeared during the war years is education. The government education system was boycotted by the population outside the major cities; and the school buildings themselves are mostly in ruins. Occasionally the SMU came across small madrassas where religious-based education is offered. Beyond this, there is nothing.

The UNESCO plan for building a very limited number of education centres is hardly likely to meet the enormous need of a population which is now largely illiterate. It is recommended that another look being taken at solutions to the problem, based, if necessary, on the training and provision of teachers and materials, possibly using mosques and other existing buildings: even, maybe, operating outside during the summer months.
7 UN MANAGEMENT

7.1 The Role of UNOCA

The presence of a UN office inside Paktyka on a permanent basis will increase the confidence of the people in the UN's commitment to the reconstruction programme. It will also greatly increase the understanding of those responsible for making this assistance available, permitting a permanent finger on the pulse of local developments and attitudes.

The main job of UNOCA within the provinces must be one of liaison with the shuras and leaders to ensure intelligent programme planning together with timeliness and ease of execution.

The UNOCA teams must coordinate the efforts of the other UN agencies and NGOs, paying particular attention to security of goods and personnel; identifying, agreeing and monitoring projects; and calling forward materials so that work can proceed without delays.

7.2 Staffing

7.2.1 International

Such a role will call for a particular calibre of personnel. The living conditions will often be difficult or, at least, primitive. The diet is monotonous and the working hours long. Travel is arduous and uncomfortable. On the other hand, for those who enjoy the challenge of a different culture, the Afghans are warm and generous friends and hosts, provided one does not abuse their hospitality or transgress the straightforward rules of their society.

Ability to live rough and enjoyment in adventure must be tempered with common sense, creative vision and proven management capability. Boy adventurers - of whatever age - should be discouraged. A sense of humour is essential. It goes without saying, perhaps, that alcohol and sexual diversions will not be available on the menu.

This guidance is offered because it is realised that these qualities may be rare in organisations whose officials are more used to an ordered lifestyle in capital cities, surrounded by most modern conveniences. It may therefore be necessary to look outside the ranks of the UN for suitable candidates.

7.2.2 National

National staff should form the bulk of each office in the provinces. The first rule should be to try filling these posts with people who are acceptable to the local tribal groupings.
However, it should be borne in mind that their very relationship with local people will impose strong pressures on them. That is why it is essential that final responsibility for decisions should be in the hands of international staff.

All non-technical posts should, wherever possible, be filled from the local pool of labour. There is considerable resentment at the concept that the best jobs go to refugees who have spent the war years outside the country. This will take time to heal but remains, for the moment, a fact of life in Afghanistan.

It will be wise to temper wage levels to those of the local population, if resentment is to be avoided.

7.3 Office & Accommodation

UN offices should be sited taking into account such factors as reasonable communications - including the availability of a landing strip for light aircraft - as well as facilities for forward storage of goods (see 8.2 below) and the proximity of the provincial centre, if one exists.

Accommodation must offer reasonable living and messing facilities for all the team's personnel.

A good source of water - preferably a clean well - is an essential if sickness is to be avoided.

The possibility of a vegetable garden will be an added aid to the maintenance of the team's health.

7.4 Resources & Equipment

The first essential is a generator of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the office and the living accommodation.

Once this is installed, electrical equipment such as a photocopier, battery-charging equipment, computers, electric light etc., should be made available.

Radio communications are essential for both work and security. It is recommended that SITOR equipment be installed to enable hard-copy messages to be passed and received. It is also essential that all mission vehicles be radio-equipped.

First-line spares should be carried for all vehicles on strength; and there should be some facility for repair of vehicles and equipment on an emergency basis.

All offices and vehicles should carry first-aid kits and there should be a medicine chest available in the office to cover foreseeable emergencies.
8 LOGISTICS

8.1 Logistic Plan

8.1.1 Forward Base Concept

With the establishment of UN offices within the provinces, the long supply route from Peshawar for each individual need becomes redundant. Provided that sufficient bulk storage can be made available and that reliable onward transport can be arranged, it will be feasible to establish forward logistics bases, managed by UNILOG. These bases can then respond more readily to call forward requests made by UNOCA for the timely execution of projects and for emergency assistance supplies if needed.

8.1.2 Transport Policy

UNILOG is already developing its plans for the optimum deployment of the transport available to it for this purpose.

It is understood that, in areas where the security of passage is guaranteed by the shuras, they will employ their own trucks in unescorted convoys: apart from the presence of a radio-equipped control vehicle. In other areas, they will continue using hired transport with escorts arranged by the consignees.

It will be the responsibility of UNOCA to arrange safe passage guarantees with the shuras; and to arrange consignee’s escorts where such safe passage cannot be guaranteed.

8.2 Staffing

For practical purposes, it is suggested that, in locations where the UNOCA office and UNILOG’s logistic base are together - which would normally be the case - office and living accommodation should be shared.

UNILOG would need one logistics controller - probably an international staff member - together with the necessary storemen and a transport despatcher.

In addition, if a forward workshop facility is present (see 8.4 below), there will be a need for at least one fitter mechanic to be present. He can be supplemented by local labour, which would have the added benefit of providing on-the-job training.

8.3 Equipment

The presence of a fleet of UNILOG trucks would call for a forward workshop facility, able to carry out routine inspections and maintenance as well as first-line repairs. This might call for an ancillary generator.
9 TIMEFRAME

9.1 Pre-Winter 1990

The programme for Paktyka has been interrupted by the evacuation of the SNE and other international personnel to Pakistan as a result of the problem of insecurity posed by the military build up and impending fighting around Kabul.

This has had the effect of preventing the final important planning meetings with all shuras except that at Zarghun Shah. In turn, this has prevented arrangements for the delivery and storage of wheat-for-work being finalised in the remaining locations.

However, it is vital that confidence in the UN's undertakings is not eroded when it has taken so much effort to re-establish it. It is equally vital that the means to initiate work be delivered before the roads become impassable.

It is therefore proposed that every effort should be made to enable WFP to deliver the following wheat-for-work:

- Urgun shura. 400 tonnes. To be stored under their arrangements and safeguards. Available for any reconstruction work that can be undertaken in the district during the winter months.

- Zarghun Shah shura. 400 tonnes. For the four sub-districts. To be used as agreed.

- Sharan shura. 200 tonnes. To be delivered into the UN Rubb Hall tent for storage under the shura's protection until UNOCA can discuss wheat-for-work projects with them.

The 200 tonnes destined for Qara Bagh in Ghazni Province cannot be delivered until the spare Rubb Hall tent from Zarghun Shah has been delivered and erected on site.

9.2 Spring 1991

The opportunity is now at hand to plan for the opening of a permanent UN office in Paktyka in Spring 1991. This opportunity should not be missed.

Whereas it was originally recommended that such an office should be sited at Urgun because of its relatively easy access from the border at Angurada, the latest and likely future developments make Zarghun Shah a more suitable site, both because of its more central location as well as because of its forward storage potential. (Earlier optimistic estimates by the UN for repair of the potentially extensive storage facilities at Urgun have been revised because of apparent high costs involved).
It is recommended that planning for staffing, equipping and accommodating this office and the attached logistics base should start without delay. The initial phase of operation may need to be undertaken in less than ideal circumstances. However, the plans should be ready so that work on a more permanent solution may begin as soon as the weather permits.

In planning all assistance programmes for 1991, it would seem that the UN should take careful note of the possibility of close consultation and cooperation with the newly-formed national shura for the liberated areas and, in particular, the advice of that wise and courageous chief of the civil affairs wing, Moulvi Arsalah.
Food for Work
Agreement

The United Nations and The ........ Shura agree to work in partnership to carry out the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction works detailed in the Annex A to this Agreement.

The United Nations agrees to provide The ........ Shura with the quantity of Wheat specified in Annex B to this Agreement.

The ........ Shura agrees to use the aforementioned wheat to pay for all costs in connection with the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction works, including cost of labour, materials and administrative overheads.

The United Nations and The ........ Shura agree to accept joint responsibility for monitoring and approving the satisfactory progress and completion of the works detailed in Annex A.

Signed.................. Signed..................
Date......................... Date.........................
Place......................... Place.........................
On behalf of
The United Nations. On behalf of
The ............... Shura.
### WORK SCHEDULE

Wheat-for-Work Project No: [Blank space] Afs/Seer= 550

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