

# Report on the Activities of the SPACH Representative in Afghanistan

Robert Kluyver

01 March to 31 October 2000

## **Introduction**

This report briefly summarizes my main activities as SPACH representative in Afghanistan. More detailed information is available in the reports and project proposals I have submitted to SPACH in this period.

I would like to thank the members of SPACH's Executive Committee, and especially Mrs. Mirella Frahi, SPACH programme coordinator, for giving me such free rein in performing my duties. I hope I've fulfilled them in a satisfactory manner. Special thanks also to Mir Ahmad Joyenda, my assistant, without whom I could not have done much. Ehsanullah Mamundzai gave me friendly and professional support from the Islamabad office, making things much easier for me. The UNOCHA/UNDP office in Kabul supported me fully, notably by providing SPACH with a car in Kabul, giving free access to all communication facilities (radio and e-mail), helping me with my visas and generally, by being very friendly and helpful at all times. In eight months I have made many friends, among expatriates and Afghans alike, who have all provided valuable assistance at different times and in various fields; I could not name them all for want of place.

This report is structured along the main responsibilities outlined in my terms of reference, namely:

- 1) Opening an office for SPACH in Kabul
- 2) Maintaining regular contacts with the local authorities
- 3) Capacity-building activities with SPACH's local partners
- 4) Supervising SPACH projects and proposing new projects to the Executive Committee
- 5) Keeping abreast of illegal excavations, the trade in antiquities, and surveying the present condition of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage

## **1) The Kabul Office**

An office was opened at 192 Chicken Street, in Shahr-e Nao, Kabul. The rent is low, even to Kabul standards (70\$ a month), but considerable time and effort had to be put into rehabilitating and furnishing it.

The 200 m<sup>2</sup> apartment has two office spaces, two bedrooms, one dining room and a study, as well as three bathrooms, a kitchen and a balcony. It is fully furnished and equipped with all facilities. Instead of employing a chowkidar, SPACH pays its share of a street guard's fees, who patrols Chicken Street all night to protect the many carpet and handicrafts stores there. I declined to employ a cook even after SPACH approval, for there are many food-shops and restaurants in the area.

The apartment, which I also used for living quarters, has an extra room and office which may be **rented out to visitors**. We agreed on the following rates for rental of one room, shared use of the kitchen and bathroom, and exclusive use of an office when free:

- 10\$ per night
- 40\$ per week
- 100\$ per month

My **staff** consisted of only two people: Mir Ahmad Joyenda, who has been helping SPACH since its foundation, worked for me part-time as an assistant; and Nasrullah Baqoy, employed for several years as driver by Mrs. Carla Grissmann, was my driver and all-round aide, doing acquisitions, serving tea to guests, etc. After two months I also started employing a cleaner who would come two or three mornings a week to clean the apartment, do the laundry etc.

Careful track was kept of SPACH belongings. I established a complete list of SPACH **library** items and acquisitions in western languages (English, French, Italian, Russian and German). Joyenda made a similar list of Dari and Pushtu books, but it was only partially registered in the database. This is the kind of work for which we need an assistant who knows how to use a computer. A database was likewise made for more than 800 **photographs** of historical monuments and sites, giving the description of each photograph. It is compatible with Nancy

Dupree's (ACBAR's) photocatalogue. Finally, I spent the required time to do the accounts, make an inventory of our office equipment, etc.

At the SPACH Executive Committee Meeting in May I pleaded for an expansion of the Kabul Office's capabilities, in order to work more effectively. At that time all propositions were turned down for a perceived lack of funds. SPACH's financial position has improved however, and the increase in activities initiated in Kabul now fully justifies the following expansion:

- Mir Ahmad **Joyenda** will work **full time**, as senior consultant, and in the absence of an expatriate function as *de facto* office manager.

- An expatriate hired locally (**Nellika Little**, who holds a BA in Art History, speaks Dari, has working experience in Afghanistan, and whose parents live in Kabul) will be responsible for the approved training programme, daily running of the office, supervision of SPACH projects, reporting, and liaising with the Executive Committee.

- A **young trainee** will be permanently present in the office, function as a librarian, and help in administrative tasks (accountancy, filing, writing letters, receiving people, etc).

- In the presence of this expanded office staff, the employment of a part-time **cook** and a small food-budget is now justified.

- A desk-top **computer** has been acquired recently for the staff and trainees, the laptop computer being reserved for the expatriate.

- The **rent** has been paid for the coming six months and the **car** that the UNDP graciously loans to us will stay in our use for a while longer.

## **2) Contacts with the Authorities**

Regular meetings were held with Deputy Minister for Culture Mawlawi **Hotaki**, who has been SPACH's main government contact since he took office. Although personal relations always remained good, work relations went through ups and downs as the emphasis of government policies shifted.

All started on a positive note, and I presented several proposals on future cooperation, among which a plan for a **General Survey** to be carried out with governmental institutions such as the Kabul Museum, the Institute of Archaeology and the Department of Historical Monuments. Other plans included organizing an **exhibition**, financing a cultural magazine called **Farhang**, making a documentary movie on Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage and organizing all bibliographical and photographic resources available at SPACH and in the various institutions into a common database.

In the beginning several officials, among whom Hotaki, insisted that SPACH should **register**, like all other foreign (and local) organizations. There was widespread hope that by establishing an office in Kabul, SPACH would increase the rhythm of its assistance to Afghanistan. Many projects were proposed to me and the registration process was seen as a statement of our intentions to continue working in Afghanistan.

In May, however, it became clear that there were no funds available for the projects put forward, and that the permanence of the Kabul Office was not guaranteed. SPACH Executive Committee members thought it unwise to register. This perceived lack of response of SPACH upset Hotaki and other officials (such as the members of the Academy of Sciences) and that dogged good relationships between SPACH and the authorities.

Relations improved as I organized the transfer of the **Rabatak inscription** from Pul-e Khumri to the Kabul Museum together with members of the Museum and the Institute of Archaeology. After that Carla Grissmann and I helped organize a temporary but widely publicized **exhibition** at the museum centering around the Inscription. Meanwhile progress was made on the elaboration of the first issue of **Farhang** magazine, fully financed by SPACH. All these activities were financed by squeezing the Kabul Office budget.

The "**Museum opening**" upset us (besides Carla Grissmann, Nancy Dupree was also present) as no recognition was made of SPACH's role either in organizing the transfer of the Rabatak inscription and the exhibition or, more generally, in the domain of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage – despite SPACH acceding to the government's request to host **a lunch** for 100 people in the Ariana Hotel to celebrate the event. In a meeting I had subsequently with Mawlawi Hotaki he justified this new stance by stating that SPACH was not helping the government, this being understood in the narrow sense as helping individual members of the regime, either with jobs and privileges or just plainly with money.

This tougher position was epitomized in Mrs. Grissmann's standoff with Hotaki over the issue of the **Museum Staff's incentives**, which were always paid directly to the staff, but which the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) now wanted to collect and distribute themselves. After protracted and painful negotiations Mrs. Grissmann finally agreed, in the full knowledge that part of these incentives would be retained. These recent troubles cannot be blamed on officials of the MoIC, because it has clearly become a new government policy, and all NGOs have to deal with it. Any project may be stopped if it does not include the participation of members of designated institutions.

This is part of a recent trend in Taleban policy towards NGOs : the search for greater **control over NGO activities**. This was already latent in the previous conditions to be signed by foreign organizations desiring to register, but this summer the government increased its capacity for control when it unilaterally changed the statutes of foreign organizations. The result is that all projects have to be submitted to the government for approval. NGOs must provide the means for the government to supervise the given project and give full details of any project (including the financial aspects and reports).

Most of my latest meetings with members of the MoIC have thus revolved around these issues, trying to establish some rules (employment of one government employee only per project, participation in the choice of who this person should be, payment of his salary to the MoIC and the DSA directly to the person involved).

Despite all this, relations have remained **cordial**, and I continue to believe that Hotaki is genuinely concerned about cultural issues, and therefore sincerely tries to advance SPACH's cause. Nevertheless I regret not having expanded my contacts in the Afghan Government (I never met Qudratullah Jamal, presently Minister of Information and Culture). And since SPACH has to abide by the statutes imposed on foreign organizations anyhow – no special case is made for us - SPACH may still decide to register, as a confidence-building measure.

### **3) Capacity Building**

Our main capacity building partners on the institutional side are, naturally, the Institute of Archaeology, the **Department of Historical Monuments** (DHM) and its regional branches, and the Kabul Museum. I soon found out that there was no point in trying to work with the DHM, which depends on the MoIC, because the Ministry itself gives the priority to the Kabul Museum. We could, and eventually did, work with members of the DHM's staff in Kabul, and with the local DHM of Herat. The Institute of Archaeology, meanwhile, depends on the Academy of Sciences and thus is in a wholly different institutional setting.

I soon knew their principal requirements, mainly **equipment and communication facilities** (computers and links to institutions in the West), but these could not be obtained through SPACH for want of funds. Also, equipment and funds given in the past to the Kabul Museum have simply disappeared, giving ground to the reluctance of members of SPACH's Executive Committee. The Kabul Museum Museology Department, which SPACH had in the past agreed to support, did receive attention from SPACH, but this is discussed in Mrs. Grissmann's report. Her report also discusses other aspects of cooperation with the Kabul Museum.

The present director of the **Institute of Archaeology**, Dr. Ferowski, is a cautious, procedural man, who does not seem able to give any impulse to the Institute's activities. He insisted heavily on the registration of SPACH and the signing of "protocols of agreement" before starting any kind of collaboration with SPACH. Eventually he grew upset at the lack of SPACH's response to his project proposals, which I put forward at the Executive Committee meeting in May, and our meetings, which had become pointless, ceased to take place. I did later work with members of the Institute of Archaeology such as Zakir and Rasuli, both competent and dynamic people.

The only institution with whom SPACH really collaborated in a satisfactory manner, in the sense of "capacity building", is the **Herat Department of Historical Monuments**. Indeed, we support the tile workshop there. The tiles they produce are however of quite a poor quality. I have strongly argued to increase SPACH assistance to this workshop, by allowing them to acquire new tools, new pigments, paying for expertise exchange with other tile masters, and increasing the pay. The rates presently paid provide no incentive to attract competent people.

In **Mazar-i Sharif** there is a similar tile workshop, also run by the local Department of Historical Monuments. My proposal to support them was eventually picked up by FOCUS humanitarian agency. I strongly recommend SPACH to coordinate with FOCUS a common

programme to support both workshops in a interlocking fashion, including expertise exchange with tile workshops in Iran and Pakistan.

Another matter was collaborating with **APHCHA**, the Afghan counterpart to SPACH, fully registered as a local NGO. Vocational skill training and capacity building is one of the stated goals of APHCHA. There were no institutional hurdles here, and the relations posed no problems, since APHCHA is run by Joyenda. But APHCHA is no more than an empty shell, set up partly on SPACH's request. They had no programme running, nor did they envisage searching for any funds outside of SPACH. Most members of APHCHA, which is an open membership organization for all Afghan professionals interested in their cultural heritage, are employed elsewhere, and will only devote time to APHCHA if and when there are concrete projects.

APHCHA completed a survey with recommendations for restoration of **Timur Shah Mausoleum** in Kabul in 1999, and I did my best to find the funds for APHCHA to accomplish this restoration, eventually obtaining a positive (but so far not definitive) answer from the Japanese embassy in Islamabad. I also helped Joyenda and Dr. Jonathan Lee set up a project to catalogue the photographic collection of the Institute of Archaeology, submitted to Mr. Paul Bucherer-Dietschi who has apparently agreed to finance this APHCHA project.

It is likely that APHCHA will get even more work: it seems best for SPACH to implement all future conservation and restoration projects through APHCHA, who as stated is not only fully registered, but also enjoys a close relationship with Hotaki and other personalities of the cultural scene in Afghanistan. APHCHA is in a better position than SPACH to negotiate the implementation of projects with the authorities. Professionals who have previously worked for SPACH, such as Naqshbandi in Ghazni and Eng. Sharif Mohammady in Balkh, have become members of APHCHA. This is much safer for them than if they work as individual contractors for SPACH. By working through APHCHA, SPACH avoids any entanglements between SPACH and the Afghan government. And finally, APHCHA can provide the framework for future capacity-building efforts.

Capacity-building efforts were thus made difficult by a combination of lack of funds and institutional hurdles. Another matter however was **awareness-raising**, which is of course much less costly. For one part I used informal channels: discussions with local (village) authorities and any concerned people, trying to make them aware that the looting of their cultural heritage was detrimental to their future. This is a tricky matter, though, since the sole presence of a foreigner interested in cultural relics makes most Afghans think that there must be valuable artifacts in the places he visits<sup>1</sup>. At all sites I visited I was surrounded by many locals who enquired whether I thought there were valuables at that place. I always answered by the negative, of course, explaining that what was there was only valuable from a historical point of view, not from a financial one, and that preserving the site might make it an income-generating tourist attraction in times to come.

SPACH was in the **local news** (Radio Shariat, BBC Pushtu service, and Kabul Times) several times during my stay, and once I spoke at a press conference (on 17 August). Many Afghans are aware of the existence of SPACH and know it takes part in the preservation of their cultural heritage. This is quite positive, and even important. Kate Clark of the BBC made a TV report on the "Museum Opening" for the World Service, and I later accompanied her to Ghor and Herat, where she made a separate report on SPACH's project in Herat.

The main awareness-raising activity was however the financing of a cultural magazine called **Farhang** (meaning "Culture" in Persian), of which the first issue has not yet appeared at the time of writing, apparently due to problems with the printer. Hotaki placed supreme importance in this matter during each of our meetings, and was quite satisfied with SPACH's acceptance of the project. Likewise he has asked repeatedly for assurances that SPACH will continue to finance Farhang in the future. I have made that conditional upon our approval of the first issue, upon a non-partisan editorial policy, and upon the condition that contributions be accepted from all sources on the sole criterion of scientific validity and relevance to culture. Nancy Dupree, Carla Grissmann and I have each contributed an article which will be published in English (other languages used are Pushtu and Dari).

---

<sup>1</sup> In one instance I made a pile of stones, at the minaret of Jam, to remember from which point I had taken measurements of the minaret's inclination. When I returned two months later excavations had taken place at that precise point. I don't think that was coincidence.

The Kabul Office budget for the coming year includes funds for the printing of two more issues of Farhang. This might not be enough, and SPACH should consider giving a more long-term engagement to support it (on the mentioned conditions) if the magazine indeed turns out to be satisfactory.

My terms of reference suggested that I select a couple of **trainees** to accompany me on my surveys and monitoring trips. This was not feasible, since I was in no position to impart any kind of training, and the person who was, Joyenda, could not accompany me on trips because he worked only part-time for SPACH. Besides, the future of SPACH's office in Kabul being uncertain, it was unrealistic to start on a training programme.

It was only after the Executive Committee meeting in September, in which it was decided to keep the Kabul office open for another year and employ Joyenda full time, that I went ahead with my earlier plans to devise a **training programme**. It will be run in a joint manner by Joyenda and the SPACH liaison in Kabul, Ms. Little. Between a dozen and twenty Afghan and visiting foreign professionals will train six candidates in archaeology, conservation and restoration techniques, surveying and project writing. Over a six month period, twenty seminars and an equal number of field trips are to take place, and each trainee will end with a paid apprenticeship on one of the SPACH/APHCHA projects.

#### **4) Supervision and elaboration of SPACH projects in Afghanistan**

During my stay, one conservation project was completed, and several initiated. Much more could have been done in this period, were it not for a lack of funds. Indeed, many projects were proposed to me by our Afghan partners, and I elaborated on some of them to present them to the Executive Committee. In May it was decided to launch one project considered previously, namely restoration works at Herat. At the next meeting of the Executive Committee, in September, the decision was made to start projects at Jam and in Ghazni, while we may expect more projects to be approved in the short term, in the provinces of Balkh and Bamyan.

*Balkh, Masjed-e No Gumbad* : In the course of the previous winter and spring Eng. Sharif Mohammady of the Department of Historical Monuments in Mazar-i Sharif had replaced some of the sheets of metal roofing over this ancient mosque. I monitored the results in April, and found that it had been done correctly. This site needs enhanced protection however, for it is still subjected to extremely strong winds – which incidentally also pry loose the metal roofing – and has become the home to many pigeons, whose droppings damage the delicate 10<sup>th</sup> century decoration.

*Ghazni, Tepe Sardar*: The protective works at Tepe Sardar were completed in a highly satisfactory manner during the summer, under the supervision of Naqshbandi. The budget we had devised together was scrupulously followed, and Naqshbandi actually increased the volume of work considerably, to include the whole site, which is now covered with a layer of kahgil (straw and mud plaster) and intelligent draining systems.

*Herat, Minarets*: This project was submitted by Engineer Jawed of HAFO and approved by the Executive Committee in May 2000. It had to be revised substantially twice, once in July/August to qualify for WFP funding under the Food for Work scheme, and once in October, as it became clear that the amount of work to be done and costs for material had been underestimated. I spent almost a month in Herat, altogether, to organize and supervise the project. Besides 100 tons of wheat from the WFP, SPACH received the support of AREA (providing about 3,000 saplings from their nursery), IAM (providing a playground) and DACAAR (willing to provide a well). Brigitte Neubacher, who's spent some time in Herat on UN duty, has further enlisted support among the "civil society" of Herat.

The construction of a wall around what will be the park of Gawhar Shad is proceeding nicely, and there is no reason that the mud-brick wall around the minarets should pose any difficulties. The park itself will be landscaped this winter, and planted in the spring. The plan to repair the five minarets proved much too ambitious. Only putting up the scaffolding around one minaret to reach the 18 m. high entrance took almost two months, and once inspected from the inside, it was found that repairing it would absorb more efforts and funds than had been allocated for the five minarets together. If done thoughtfully and artfully, the repair of

this minaret should not be too difficult, and not beyond the skill of Engineer Shafi, who is directing the project for HAFO. But see considerations below.

Herat, Citadel : The rubble-clearing in the upper half of the Citadel, envisioned in the revised Herat & Jam project, has been completed, but after a close inspection of the main gate, Engineer Shafi and I decided to suspend the plan to reopen this main gate and rehabilitate the office space in the Citadel. This would be a major intervention costing tens of thousands of dollars, and the Citadel of Herat is one of those monuments that deserves the highest standards in restoration.

Ghor, Minaret of Jam: After much hesitation it was decided to start the second phase of the construction of flood protection walls at the base of the minaret. This monument is such a unique piece of Ghorid craftsmanship that any intervention near it should indeed be duly considered. But all people, amateurs and experts alike, who have visited the site recently agreed that the embankment at the foot of the minaret had crumbled to such a degree that the next flood of the Hari Rud river might seriously damage its foundations. Making use of the opportunity of Food for Work aid, it was decided to remove the natural dam formed at the junction of the two rivers, which is withholding the water at the foot of the minaret, raising the level of the water and causing infiltration to the foundations of the minaret.

Ghazni, mausoleum of Abdurrazzaq: As a second phase of protective works at Ghazni, and following the good results of Naqshbandi's work at Tepe Sardar, it was decided to fund the restoration of this building, that used to house the Museum of Islamic Art. The project has recently been initiated.

Many members of SPACH have questioned the **appropriateness of conservation and restoration projects** in present-day Afghanistan, and the Afghans' capacity to carry them out successfully. Foreign expertise is expensive and few specialists are willing to come to a war-torn country. I would like to submit my opinion on this matter:

- small-scale *restoration projects* that don't involve too high levels of expertise may be carried out, especially on monuments whose symbolic value is higher than their art-historical value. I am thinking of monuments such as the Victory Arch at Paghman, Timur Shah Mausoleum in Kabul, some of the better-known shrines such as Khwaja Parsa in Balkh or the shrine of Ali at Band-e Amir
- basic *protection measures* may be taken at the more valuable monuments, as long as they don't involve interventions on the monuments themselves and are reversible. This has been SPACH policy up to the present, and has inspired projects at Masjed-e No Gumbad in Balkh, the minaret of Jam, Tepe Sardar in Ghazni and around the minarets in Herat. More may be done at the Masjed-e No Gumbad, and at Bamyan
- at or around sites where many unauthorized excavations are taking place SPACH may consider carrying out *emergency excavations* in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology and the Kabul Museum. Although presence of foreign specialists is preferable and should be sought after, it should not be a prerequisite. A lot of valuable historical evidence is being rapidly destroyed in these illegal diggings, and it would be preferable in any case to intervene with the few competent professionals remaining in Afghanistan. Sites being thus destroyed are everywhere in Afghanistan. I either visited or had reliable reports on some in Bamyan, Oruzgan, Ghor (around Jam), Badghis, Logar, Nangrahar, etc.
- In those cases that it is deemed urgent to intervene directly on *important monuments*, such as the minarets of Herat or the Buddhas of Bamyan, SPACH should proceed with extreme care and appeal widely to foreign expertise. In most cases delays of several months make no difference to the monument in question. It is not wise to entrust these projects to people, Afghan or foreign, who do not have the required expertise. Since nobody now in Afghanistan possesses this degree of authority, such projects can only be led by internationally recognized foreign experts.

Small-scale interventions (typically costing between 2,000 and 10,000 US\$) in the above-mentioned fields should be considered as essential elements of SPACH's **capacity building** efforts. They provide good opportunities for the remaining professionals to upgrade (and prove) their skills, and chances for the candidates of SPACH's training programme to acquire

some practical experience. Moreover, they are most useful for channeling funds to the starving sector of cultural preservation. As long as it is perceived in Afghanistan that there is no living to be made in this field it is vain to hope that young Afghans will specialize in it.

Also, the symbolic, "healing" value of restoration efforts, particularly on popular monuments such as those given above, should not be underestimated. They are actually very much part of the **peace process**, especially when undertaken by Afghans themselves.

This does not mean that **foreign guidance** is not required. Actually it is very useful, and on two levels:

- the presence of *foreign experts* on SPACH projects should always be sought after; they may share their expertise with Afghan professionals and impart some training to SPACH trainees; their presence is generally motivating, as cultural heritage professionals in Afghanistan feel abandoned by their colleagues abroad. Above all they can give guidance to SPACH on particular projects, supervise and monitor them.

- the presence of an *expatriate* working full-time for SPACH in Afghanistan is very important. First, for representational purposes: I had many meetings with officials at all levels, from village elders to governors, including many heads of departments. These courtesy visits are important in Afghan culture and advance our projects a lot. Practically all obstacles can be cleared in this way, while it is much more difficult for Afghans, always hindered by their tribal/ethnic/confessional backgrounds when they're in unfamiliar settings. Second, the expatriate can always question projects, check prices, seek advice and, most importantly, help Afghans to present and carry out projects in ways acceptable to donors. The expatriate provides a permanent link to the international community, and this is considered of utmost importance by the Afghans themselves.

## **5: Surveys**

Much time was dedicated to visiting monuments and sites. Some of these "surveys" were actually akin to enlightened tourism, as I would do little more than travel with books and a camera, and compare the present condition of monuments to that when they were last recorded. Others were more adventurous, as I would follow up on rumors of illegal excavations, reach difficultly accessible locations and conduct my own investigations. Others, finally, were more thorough and professional, when I'd make a detailed study of a particular monument or site, as basis for a project proposal.

The sites I visited are listed in the following table

<b>Month</b>	<b>Site, province</b>	<b>Photos</b>	<b>Discussed in...</b>
March	Guldara Stupa, Kabul	No	Report 3, April
March	Tepe Maranjan, Kabul	No	Report 3, April
April	Takht-e Pol Mosque, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Shahr-e Barbar near Daulatabad, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Kafir Qala (Qala-ye Musa Doz), Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Tepe Bagh-e Shur, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Minaret of Zadyan, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Shrine of Mir-i Ruzadar, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Shrine of Khwaja Parsa, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Masjed-e No Gumbad, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Rabatak, Baghlan	Yes	Balkh report
April	Surkh Kotal, Baghlan	Yes	Balkh report
April	Bus-i Shan, Baghlan	Yes	Balkh report
April	Takht-i Rustam, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Bala Hissar of Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Shrine of Pir Ali Baba, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Shrine of Khwaja Akasha, Balkh	Yes	Balkh report
April	Tepe Sardar, Ghazni	Yes	Ghazni report
April	Palace of Sultan Massud III, Balkh	Yes	Ghazni report
May	Shrine of Pacha Sahib, Kabul	Yes	
May	Victory Arch of Paghman, Kabul	Yes	
June	Haji Sahib shrine and mosque, Kabul	Yes	

Month	Site, province	Photos	Discussed in...
July	Masjed-e No Gumbad, Balkh	No	
July	Pul-e Imam Bokhri, Balkh	No	
July	Cham Qala, Baghlan	No	
July	Kayhan, Baghlan	Yes	
July	Kafir-Qala Bayani, Saighan, Bamyan	No	Hazarajat Report
July	Mausoleum of Tuman Agha, Kohsan, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
July	Masjed-e Jami, Ghoriyān, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
July, Aug, Oct	Old Town of Herat, countless sites (mosques, shrines, baths, cisterns, serais, private houses, streets)	Yes	Herat Monuments
July	Ansari's tomb, Gazergah, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
July	Minarets of Herat	Yes	Herat & Jam Report
July	Mausoleum of Queen Gawhar Shad, Herat	Yes	Herat & Jam Report
Aug, Oct	Qala-ye Ekhtiyaruddin (Citadel of Herat)	Yes	Herat & Jam Report
Aug, Sep	Minaret of Jam, Ghor	Yes	Herat & Jam Report
Aug, Sep	Ghorid monument of Chisht-e Sharif, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Aug	Caravanserail near Chisht-e Sharif, Herat	No	Herat Monuments
Aug	Shrine of Khwaja Laikhar, Ghazni	Yes	
Aug	Mausoleum of Abdurrazzaq, Ghazni	No	Abdurrazzaq project proposal
Aug	Mausoleum of Mohammed Sharif Khan, Ghazni	Yes	
Aug	Minaret of Bahram Shah, Ghazni	Yes	
Aug	Minaret of Massud III, Ghazni	Yes	
Aug	Kakrak, Bamyan	Yes	Bamyan Report
Aug	Chehel Burj, Yakawlang, Bamyan	Yes	Hazarajat Report
Sep	Foladi, Bamyan	Yes	Bamyan Report
Sep	Bamyan Buddhas and surrounding caves, Bamyan	Yes	Bamyan Report
Sep	Fil Khana, Nangrahar	Yes	
Sep	Hadda, Nangrahar	Yes	
Sep	Shrine of Ali, Band-e Amir, Bamyan	Yes	Hazarajat Report
Sep	Qala-ye Gawargin, Yakawlang, Bamyan	Yes	Hazarajat Report
Sep	Qala-ye Ahangaran, Ghor	No	Hazarajat Report
Sep	Village of Pir Pahlevan, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Oct	Minaret M4, Herat	Yes	Herat progress report
Oct	Masjed-e Jami, Ziyaratgah, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Oct	Shrine of Mullah-e Kalon, Ziyaratgah, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Oct	Madrassah-e Hauz, Ziyaratgah, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Oct	Chehelsutun mosque, Ziyaratgah, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments
Oct	Bridge of Pul-i Malan, Herat	Yes	Herat Monuments

**Nota Bene:** a full list of photos, with descriptions of each one, is available. In some cases the photos I took were lost due to technical errors or loss of the film. The monuments which are not described in one of the reports will be the subject of articles to be published in the SPACH newsletter.

It was further suggested in my terms of reference that I try to investigate the illegal antiquities trade and if possible, do something in collaboration with the authorities to prevent it. Finally I was to track illegal excavations, record these and new sites, and try to take photographs of them and the artifacts found there.

I did investigate some aspects of the antiquities trade, notably routes and prices, which will be the subject of a forthcoming article. As to illegal excavations, there are literally hundreds taking place in the country at the same time. Moreover, since they are illegal, especially since the Taleban government has promulgated a law specifically prohibiting them, it is not easy to catch people while excavating, or to make enquiries. As for photographs, there is nothing less inspiring than a photograph of a hole which may have been an illegal excavation. I could not take any photographs of artifacts discovered in these excavations, because they are



immediately spirited away to Peshawar. In some rare cases misguided people would come to the SPACH office trying to sell antiquities, but these were in general not valuable enough to take photos of.

Given the sums of money involved in the antiquities business, and since it seems to be intimately linked to criminal circuits also involved in drugs, it is dangerous to poke one's nose into this trade. Besides, SPACH has a high profile, being often named in the local media, so as SPACH representative I could hardly make discreet investigations. Sometimes I posed as an art dealer myself, to gain the confidence of my informants, but I usually refrained from playing this tricky role. Finally, since there is no effective law-enforcing agency to put force to the Taleban's interdiction, I had no means of action to stop illegal excavations or the trade in antiquities. In the one instance that I did find people digging up Buddhist statues, in Hadda, I took no action. I felt there was no point in reporting it to the police, the more so because it is commonly known that excavations are taking place there.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The continued presence and slight expansion of the SPACH Office in Kabul is fully justified, given the good results we're getting. As mentioned, the preferred setup is a full-time expatriate (Ms. Nellika Little), a full-time senior consultant (Mir Ahmad Joyenda), a librarian *cum* administrative assistant to ensure permanent presence, a driver (Nasrullah) and a part-time cleaner/cook. Ms. Little and Mr. Joyenda would share the responsibility for all programmes and projects. The combination of an Afghan professional and an expatriate on an equal footing seems the most congenial, as each can complement the other.

The organization into a common database of all bibliographical and photographic resources available in Kabul (SPACH, Institute of Archaeology, Kabul Museum) should also be a pursuit of the office, and could keep the assistant busy for a long time. This should be combined with APHCHA's reorganizing of the photo collection of the Institute of Archaeology.

For the coming (winter) months the main emphasis should be put on the SPACH training programme, which will certainly be very time-absorbing, and which should, as a positive side-effect, renew SPACH's relationships with the academic community in Kabul (the Institute of Archaeology and the University). SPACH should still consider the possibility of registering, if that may ease relationships with the government.

As to capacity building activities outside of Kabul, prime consideration should be given to the two tile workshops, in Herat and Mazar, preferably in a joint programme (maybe with participation of FOCUS and other agencies).

The Kabul Office will be involved with the supervision of projects in Ghazni, Herat and Jam in the coming months, and hopefully with projects to be started in Kabul (Timur Shah Mausoleum, where SPACH will have a monitoring role) and Balkh (the dome of Khwaja Parsa). More projects should be elaborated, however; I suggest to give priority to

1) Masjed-e No Gumbad in Balkh: erecting a mudbrick wall around the whole site, to break the wind and keep out the birds.

2) Protection of the Buddhas in Bamyan and remaining paintings (see recommendations at the end of my Bamyan report)

3) Restoration of the shrine of Ali at Band-e Amir

4) Emergency excavations and conservation of frescoes at Chehel Burj, Yakawlang

5) Restoration of the Victory Arch at Paghman

6) Restoration of the mosque of Haji Sahib at Pai Menar, near Kabul

7) Restoration of Gawhar Shad Mausoleum in Herat (retiling the dome and the interior)

Projects 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 could be good opportunities to give SPACH trainees practice, and project 7 also would indirectly support the Tile Workshop in Herat.

Although surveying might not be a priority as such, some surveys should take place to give our trainees practice. The Institute of Archaeology would be our partner, and a homogeneous format should be devised for all these surveys, which could include new sites. All this information should be entered into a database, maybe using Warwick Ball's Gazetteer as a basis (see my Draft Proposal for a General Survey). To start with, it might be wise to concentrate on the Eastern Provinces (close to Kabul, and where winter weather is mild); other areas may be the Hazarajat, Badghis and Seistan.