

## **REPORTS ON THE PROGRESS OF WORKS AT HERAT**

**To:** the Chairman of SPACH, the Programme Coordinator, the members of the Executive Committee, and Engineer Jawed, HAFO director and project implementor

**From:** Robert Kluyver, SPACH representative in Afghanistan

### **Report 1**

*Herat, Jam, 26 July to 12 August 2000*

#### **Main Activities**

Coordinating SPACH's programme in Herat and Jam

Launching our programme around the minarets

Visiting sites in Herat province and the old city of Herat and taking photographs

#### **Diary**

26 July: arrival in Herat, flight by Ariana. Staying in Mandishe-Ghor hotel near the Darwaz-e Khoshk (eastern gate of the old city). Liaising with Brigitte Neubacher. Getting to know the NGOs in Herat.

27 July to 1 Aug.: Waiting for Eng. Jawed. In the meantime, discussions with WFP, DACAAR, MDM, Afghan Aid, Cristian Aid, the Department of Historical Monuments, the Herat University, Gul Agha Karimi of PGRO and others to coordinate our programmes around Herat and to prepare the survey of Jam minaret with specialists. Visit of the Tile Workshop.

Also, in-depth survey of part of the old city (two of the four quarters) taking photographs of all sites mentioned in Rafi Samizay's book. Survey of the Musallah complex taking testimonial photographs of the area (before starting works). Gazargah and other shrines around Herat visited. On Friday 28 July visit to Kohsan and Ghorian, in the Western part of the province.

1 Aug: arrival of Engineer Jawed and his assistant Amanullah.

1-5 August: Coordination of our programmed works with Engineer Jawed, Department of Historical Monuments (MoU signed) and above-mentioned NGOs. Project writing. More in-depth survey of Gawhar Shad monument. Many more photos taken until the development of one roll shows my camera is not working well (!). Meeting with Governor Khayrullah of Herat. Visit of the Citadel of Herat.

6-8 August: Survey of Jam minaret. On the way, quick survey of Chisht-e Sharif, cave-dwellings, caravanserail near Chisht-e Sharif, and village urbanization. Discussions with woluswali at Chisht.

In Jam, discussions with local people (from Taleban and opposition side), measurement of angle of the minaret, study of accomplished works, and of those yet to be done. Understanding of possible causes of leaning reached.

9-11 August: Project-writing and delivered to the WFP. Further discussions with AREA (providing saplings), IAM (providing playground) and the Department of Historical Monuments. Organisation and holding of meeting to launch community involvement in our projects in Herat.

12 August: departure to Peshawar, and from there to Kabul.

#### **Results:**

##### **1: SPACH's Herat project**

To qualify for WFP Food-for Work funding all our projects in Herat and Jam have been lumped into one. Taking use of the opportunity, we have also included labour-intensive works like the cleaning of the upper part of the citadel and the rehabilitation of its office space; we have added the minaret of Gawhar Shad in our emergency-restoration works and have encouraged the Department of Historical Monuments to accomplish complementary works, most of them at low cost, like basic protective measures of the

Gawhar Shad Mausoleum, the eventual retiling of its dome (without SPACH participation), and providing embellishments to the protective walls.

SPACH's Herat project has been completely rewritten (using WFP guidelines) and somewhat expanded. For example gates and bridges have been considered in the new budget, and a well with a diesel-powered pump, a playground (financed by IAM), landscaping of the Gawhar Shad Park and pathways, water-basins and pathways, and the planting of about 3000 trees (provided free of charge by the Afghan NGO AREA). Bowing to popular pressure, we have also included conservation and restoration measures of the Gawhar Shad Mausoleum; these, although included in the SPACH project, will actually be performed by the Department of Historical Monuments with its own funds. As mentioned, we have also included works in the Citadel: clearing of the upper part of the citadel for civil use, including the rehabilitation of the main gate which will provide access to this part only, thus separating it from the lower part of the citadel, still used as a Taleban ammunition depot. Pressure has been put on the governor, who responded positively, to relocate these military activities, but by actually starting works in the citadel we will provide extra impetus to its reclaiming for civil use. This costs SPACH nothing: labour costs are covered by the Food for Work programme, and all non-labour costs are covered by the Department of Historical Monuments, who will relocate its engineering section there. SPACH may still take up the offer of free office space in the ex-premises of the UNESCO.

The WFP has already agreed to our project, and will provide 100 metric tonnes of wheat, of which almost half goes to Jam. This corresponds to more than 16500 man-days of work, or 17000 \$ taking the low-wages rate of 1 \$ per day. Part of the wheat will however be distributed without compensating labour to families without able-bodied workers around Jam, in the drought-stricken Ghor province. In Herat we'll use only IDPs from Ghor, Badghis and Farah (also a condition for qualifying for the Food-for-Work programme).

The total cost of the project is now 29000 \$, of which nearly 3000 revert to SPACH (to its Islamabad and Kabul offices), so the real cost would be near 26000 \$, less than the sum of the amounts previously ear-marked for Herat (16850\$) and Jam (more than 11.000\$). We are aware that the Executive Committee has not yet approved funding the second part of the projected works at Jam minaret, but have submitted the project anyways, for the following reasons:

- to qualify for the WFP food for work programme
- we have reasonable hopes of finding other funding sources, including Madera, the Swiss government, UNESCO, the Japanese government, and NGOs presently working in Herat, which have shown great sympathy for our projects.

The works at the musallah complex have started. Scaffolding has been erected around one of the minarets, and on Saturday 12 August the first team of workers will start on the wall.

## **2: Survey of Jam**

The works carried out by Engineer Akbari and PGRO were judged very satisfactory by Engineer Jawed who accompanied us on this trip. I'd like to add that they're very pleasing to the eye, using traditional building techniques and harmoniously proportioned. Gabion walls will not be as esthetical, but may indeed last longer if correctly built, and can resist a stronger assault by the river. The local community, mobilized by Gul Agha Karimi who is a local VIP, is very committed to preserving the minaret and the works carried out by SPACH so far, because of Mr. Karimi. He has good contacts on both sides of the river (the taleban side and the opposition side) and we were treated very cordially by all.

Both Mr Jawed and I, and Simon, the director of Cristian Aid who visited the minaret not long ago, and in fact any person who sees the site, showed great concern about the proximity of the Hari Rud river to the foundations of the minaret. I measured that only 27 cm separate the base of the minaret and the edge of the river bank, which plunges down nearly 6 meters. The situation seems precarious and calls for immediate action.

The arguments against creating a flood-protection wall do not stand (namely the weight of the wall and the risk that narrowing the river bed, very wide at this point, would increase the height of the flood) according to Engineer Jawed. Really, not taking action would be irresponsible.

The protective wall would however have to be longer than originally planned, i.e. 45 meter on the Hari-Rud side as a minimum. On the Jam-Rud side an additional protection is needed. Mr Karimi hastily had a wall assembled as an extra to the SPACH project but Eng. Jawed didn't consider it very useful, and it should be replaced and extended by a gabion wall there where the Jam river is carving out a bend going in the direction of the minaret.

One of the reasons for the sagging and leaning of the minaret on the Hari-Rud side may be the retention of the waters of the Hari-Rud behind a natural dam created by the Jam river some years ago when a violent flood washed away many of the agricultural lands in its narrow valley, carrying big stones up to the juncture with the Hari Rud. Presently, a kind of lake has formed, extending up to 400 meters, about 20 meter wide and more than 2 meter deep at its lowest. The stagnant water would naturally have a tendency to infiltrate into the ground at the foot of the minaret. Therefore we decided that we should clear out the river bed, transferring the big stones to the sides where they might consolidate the river banks, and thus carve out a channel through which the Hari Rud may flow easily. This will be a very labour-intensive work and can be practically free for SPACH (only involving some minor transportation and supervision costs).

We had rented some surveying equipment to measure distances and the angle precisely, but due to lack of time (Engineer Jawed had an important meeting in Herat to attend) we could not finish our survey. In all we were busy for about five hours at the foot of the minar. We measured the angle at one point (definite calculation is forthcoming) to be used as a witness/marker. We also climbed to the top of the minaret, which is in a surprisingly good condition (bricks and bonds all near-perfect). It is truly remarkable, and by far the most impressive monument I've seen in Afghanistan. It looks like it was completely restored 10 years ago, except some of the external decorative brick-work and the top 15 meter of the inside, which have collapsed.

Around Jam, particularly on the other side of the Hari Rud (Firuzkoh), held by the opposition, many illegal diggings have taken place. We were told stories about ten thousands of dollars worth of antiques being found, but, seeing the general poverty, that seems to be one of the many legends about gold hoards circulating. Be it true or not, these kind of stories make it difficult to convince local authorities to stop the digging; moreover, being opposition-held territory, it is hard to find the local authorities in the first place. On the Taleban side of the river (Jam) there were hardly any illegal diggings to be seen. The area around the minar has barely been touched.

### **3: Other surveys**

*Details and photographs (?) forthcoming. Places visited:*

#### Herat

SE quarter of the old town: completely (some 20-25 sites)

SW quarter of the old town: thoroughly (some 10-15 sites)

Citadel: all parts except the two museums and the ammunition depots

Friday mosque: guided tour by Mawlawi Abdul Haq, most helpful director of the Department of Historical Monuments. (no photos)

Gazargah: tomb of Abdullah Ansari

Musallah complex, obviously

The mosque of Abdul Wakil, in process of restoration by the DHM.

Jami shrine (not much to be seen)

Pul-e Malan bridge (no photos)

#### Herat Province

Kuhsan: madrassah of Tuman Agha (also called Gawhar Shad) restored by DACAAR and DHM

Ghorian: Friday mosque (completely restored, very recently)  
Chisht-e Sharif: Ghoriid khanagah or whatever it may have been  
Near Chisht-e Sharif: Caravanserail  
Other minor sites briefly visited

## **Report 2**

**Visit of SPACH representative:** Monday 2 to Saturday 7 October 2000

**Purpose of visit:** monitoring of the project, sorting out difficulties, launching our project at Jam

**Nota Bene:** a full progress report with technical details is forthcoming; this is the responsibility of HAFO, our implementing partner. The present report is just to forewarn of some of the difficulties we're facing, and to inform you of some of the issues at hand.

**General Opinion:** the project in Herat is advancing nicely. Engineer Shafi, the project supervisor, is doing fine, and has shown himself to be competent and very dedicated. The Department of Historical Monuments has been able to solve some difficult questions, and is cooperating nicely. Overall, there is a good team spirit, and the workers are really all working, which is not always the case on Food for Work projects.

The project in Jam is all ready to start.

**Main problem encountered:** the project in Herat has been grossly underestimated, both in cost and in length, and will need to be revised. See detail below.

**Other problems:** Communications are deficient. Brigitte Neubacher, member of the Executive Committee and temporarily based in Herat, has only had time to inform us of some of the issues at hand; she was obviously too busy with her UN job. Moreover, her continued presence in Herat is not certain (pending UNOCHA decision). Engineer Jawed visited the project before me but I had no feedback on his visit, he apparently had e-mail problems. Engineer Shafi has no e-mail access, except in urgent situations through UNOCHA, but now Brigitte has left it remains to be seen if this UN service can be continued. We must develop better ways of communication, with maybe a weekly e-mail contact, between Herat, Kabul, Peshawar and Islamabad.

The same may be said of communications between the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Department of Historical Monuments in Herat, who was feeling a bit uneasy after receiving a letter from the vice-minister Hotaki requesting the project to be stopped pending further notification. Local support (the Governor) is strong enough to have allowed the project to continue. Moreover Hotaki has since then assured me that he did not wish to interfere in our projects in Herat and Jam, but he has not sent a new letter to Herat to inform them. I will request him to do that in our next meeting. To sway him if he has again changed his mind I will ask him to dispatch Engineer Maiel, member of his Ministry through the Central Department of Historical Monuments, and SPACH trainee, to supervise our project in Jam. Gul Agha Karimi, our implementor in Jam, and Engineer Shafi hope to visit Kabul before my departure, and we'll visit Hotaki together.

I have also met the Deputy Governor of Ghor, the responsible of the Department of Information and Culture in Ghor, and his colleague in Herat, as well as the head of the Department of Foreign Relations in Herat and of course the Department of Historical Monuments in Herat. These courtesy visits - we do not actually need authorizations from any of these dignitaries - were appreciated and I hope that they will serve to smooth the way for our projects.

A final problem is the lack of money for the implementation of our projects; this is true on one hand for the cash available in Herat (but that can be solved quickly), but more seriously, we should find more funds since the total cost of the project is bound to rise significantly.

**Detail of the progress on different subparts of the project** (please refer to project proposal)

### Project One: construction of a wall around Gawhar Shad Mausoleum

The work is advancing nicely, albeit at a slower pace than expected. The wall will look good when finished and I've received several compliments on it from passers-by and neighbours. Some would like the whole wall to be made of brick and cement according to present-day fashion, but that would be much too costly and, I'm sure, much less esthetic.

Several hurdles have been cleared:

- the terrain will only be open from the East side through the main gates (to the detriment of neighbours living behind it and who will now have to walk around);
- On the east (gate) side, the wall is being built *on the road* to allow it to make a straight line; this was not easy to obtain as road space, here as elsewhere, is very difficult to reclaim.
- Mr. Ross from the UN demining agency has accepted to lend us a couple of deminers, while a team under the supervision of the archaeologist Mr. Rasuli sifts through the rubble of Minar 6 which may contain unexploded ordinance or mines. Once the rubble has been cleared we may finish that section of the wall.
- the religious authorities have allowed us to build the wall close around the big madrassah which is being built on terrain once belonging to the park. We thus reclaim more than one hectare for the park, whose total surface is now approximately 6 hectares.
- IDPs are no longer settling on the land though one Kutchi tent was still standing in the middle of our site.

Moreover, since the last week of September water is again flowing through the Enjil canal around the site, allowing us to use its water. Up to the present day about 230 \$ have been spent on the water tanker, since mudbrick construction uses a lot of water.

The Gawhar Shad mausoleum has been cleaned and is used as office space, the enormous pile of tiles from the site has been organised and the mausoleum is securely locked, whereas before one could easily climb inside.

A shack has been built to keep the tools, which were in the beginning stocked in the GS mausoleum.

Alisher Nawoi mausoleum has been temporarily converted into a straw deposit.

The well once installed by DACAAR has been reopened for drinking and ablutions water.

Dr. Rasuli, an archaeologist, has arrived in the last week of September. He is not only supervising the works for the Ministry of Information and Culture, but is also responsible for ensuring no damage is done to archaeological remains. On the day after his arrival he stopped the digging of the foundations in the northern section of the eastern wall, as he saw they would cut through what seems to be an ancient wall. He will excavate around it to determine its value and importance. He's also responsible for sifting through the rubble of Minar 6 destroyed by Russian artillery fire. This should provide enough bricks for the repair of the other minars, and certainly a lot of fine tilework.

His presence will drive up the costs, for he will need a team of workers (which he'll also give some training), i.e. another ton of wheat per month; but his skills are badly needed and his presence is a guarantee that no major mistakes will be made.

Engineer Shafi expressed his worries about the insufficient budgeting of the project. We went over his administrative files together (they're very well kept). Both the amount of work and in many cases the costs of the materials have been grossly underestimated. For example, 208,000 baked bricks are needed, not 17,600 as originally planned, and their cost is 25 dollars per thousand, not 15 dollars as in the previous budget. Likewise, we need 251,482 mudbricks instead of 80,000, and the water needed for their confection was not considered in the earlier project proposals. Of course, the wall is a bit longer than originally planned, encompassing 6 ha instead of 5 ha. The total cost of materials, originally estimated at 4,852.79 \$, has been reestimated at 12,059.50 \$. Estimations of

labour have also dramatically increased : wheat for unskilled labour has been reestimated at 20,116 kgs instead of 11,730 kgs, to which we may add 2,000 kgs for the archaeological team; the skilled labour, ridiculously underestimated at 300 \$, will cost 1,893 \$ plus 300 \$ for Dr. Rasuli.

In all, we need to find an additional 9,099.00 \$ and 10,386 Kgs of wheat for the completion of this wall. But we should also consider the increase in pay for the permanent staff (HAFO and Department of Historical Monuments) which was not included in the separate budget for this project part, but included at the end of the whole budget. We are in the tenth week of activities and the wall is only about 50% completed; another 4-5 weeks are needed to finish it. Originally it was thought that it could be finished within 6 weeks.

I am convinced that waste, overpricing or undue "presents" do not play any role in these higher costs. Rather, it seems that Engineer Jawed gave in to pressure to lower the costs of the project and I myself, ultimately responsible, was not able to fully discern this as I was hurrying to finish the project proposal to hand it over to the WFP. Only now have engineering plans been made of the whole wall, leading to a more correct estimation. That should of course have been done before budgeting and approval...

Finally, a decision which has to be made urgently is the kind of gates we will put in, and their location. The Architect Hajji Ahad of the Herat Department of Historical Monuments made two drawings, one a replica of the gates that existed in the 70s, the other a beautiful one consisting of two smaller iwans surrounding a higher central one, with a small building on either side. Mrs Neubacher apparently preferred the replica on the grounds that they were the original ones and cheaper, but they are quite ugly; moreover the park has often changed and there is no reason why we should absolutely stick to its last version. Also the guard/gardener buildings on either side of the gate would come in very handy, otherwise the mausoleums might be used for this purpose, or makeshift shacks be set up.

I asked Hajji Ahad to make budgets for both of them, and submit them to SPACH, since I think this ought to be a collective decision. As to the location, two possibilities exist: one in the center of the East wall, where they used to be (they're closer to the city, in front of a main road arriving at the park, and give better access to the whole park) and one in front of the mausoleum of Gawhar Shad, Jawed's plan (they would be opposite some mechanical workshops). I asked the Department of Historical Monuments, where opinions are divided, to reach a consensus on this point.

#### Project 2: Construction of a mudbrick wall around Sultan Hussain Baiqara Mausoleum

This project has not properly started yet, with the exception of the making of mudbricks. Rather unexpectedly the Department of Historical Monuments succeeded in building a traffic limitation gate similar to the one near Gawhar Shad to avoid the passage of trucks (a previous attempt had been defeated by strong protests from the transportation sector and neighbours). The taleban guards, here as near Gawhar Shad, are being very helpful in limiting interference in our work by passers-by.

The cost of this project part will also certainly be higher, although the unskilled labour costs and the quantities of materials seem to be better estimated (not so their costs; those of lime, sand and baked bricks are heavily underestimated); some skilled labour is required for the building of the brick bridges, gates and for supervising the unskilled labour building the wall (no skilled labour was foreseen).

Engineer Shafi will prepare complete drawings and a new estimation for this project.

#### Project 3: Repair of the five minarets of the Musallah complex

In the nine weeks since the scaffolding started to be put up around Minaret #4 we haven't gotten further than reaching the entrance of the minar and cleaning it (there were literally tons of bird droppings). This project part, certainly the most important one from a conversationist viewpoint, was the most fantastically underestimated. Not only

does it take a long time to put up the scaffolding (the scaffolding actually has to go all the way to the top, on all sides of the minaret at once), but also, the damage could not be correctly verified from outside.

As it is, the central spine of this minaret has been wiped out in three parts, two of which are more than a meter long, and parts of the stairs have disappeared, in one place completely, in another partially. It is actually quite amazing (and a tribute to the 16<sup>th</sup> century architects) that the inside of the minaret hasn't completely crumbled.

There are therefore major repairs to be made. Engineer Shafi will make exact drawings of all necessary interventions, and a new budget will follow, taking into account only this minaret. I suggest that we limit the present project to this minaret, which will already greatly exceed in cost and time the planned amounts for all five of them. In case this restoration is deemed successful, we can make new plans and find new funding for the other four.

The bricks to be used for the restoration will be provided by the rubble of minaret #6; some of those required are quite special (the outer bricks of the spine have one rounded side) and it has not yet been verified whether both sets of bricks are exactly similar. As to the mortar, it has been sent to Islamabad for verification, in order to make exactly the same one.

The repairs do not seem to be too difficult, if done carefully, for there is no special brickwork and enough is still standing as an example of what is to be done. I have the impression that Engineer Shafi is up to the task, as he is fully conscious of the importance of this work and is determined to proceed cautiously.

Another problem to be solved is the lack of scaffolding. The Department of Historical Monuments does not have enough of it to reach to the highest point where repairs should be made. Our team is currently seeking a solution to this problem.

#### Project 4: Creation of the Gawhar Shad Park

Although work on this part of the project will not start until December it is high time to start thinking about how to create it, as this is what will obviously have the greatest impact on the public.

I have advised Engineer Shafi to seek the help from a professional gardener (landscapists are surely not available) and to make the plans in collaboration with the Department of Historical Monuments staff. Before reaching a decision, I suggested, the plans should be submitted to all gardening and park experts still available in the Herat region for their input. This may be a painstakingly slow process, but the stakes warrant it.

For example, some neighboring children I spoke to expressed their desire to have a football field, which I think is a perfectly reasonable demand (the park is easily big enough to leave one open space for ball games). Likewise, the playground should be somewhere near the gates. The question of where to put the gates rearises. As most people will come for strolling, picnics and the playground, I think it would be wise to keep the mausolea a bit secluded, which is more fitting for the women pilgrims too.

To make our task easier, the former pathways, fountain space etc. are still quite visible. Although a good reason to follow the earlier layout is that it was probably better thought out than ours, we may deviate from it when improvements may be made.

The plans that will be made will show each tree, each flowerbed (not included in the budget, but hopefully provided at low cost or free of charge), and all infrastructural elements.

The well will be located in higher ground towards the northwest corner of the park. Brigitte's idea of having it powered by windmills is nice, but I already discussed that with AREA (who also provide windmills, at a cost of about 2,000 \$ each). They advised me against it because, first, about five would be needed to power a pump, and second, the park needs to be irrigated also when there is no wind, which implies building quite a big

water reservoir. However unecological and noisy, I think it's wiser to stick to the diesel-powered pump for the time being.

The cost of the park creation is probably underestimated, because some of the required materials have not been considered: for example, tubes to link waterchannels under the pathways, toilet and washing facilities, not to speak of lighting - which can be installed in a later phase, for it will take about two years before the garden is open to the public. Engineer Shafi reckoned it would take about two months, including the planting of the trees, to complete the park.

#### Project 5: Clearing and re-opening of the citadel

Although the clearing of the upper part of the citadel has already begun, I have decided to halt the project. A closer inspection of the main gates, to be reopened in order to have access to the upper part of the citadel and the projected office space there, convinced all present that this was a major project in itself, that would cost at least 30,000.00 \$, according to Engineer Shafi. Indeed, the walls on both sides of the main gate would need to be fortified, for both are falling. The eastern wall does not support anything (and is not supported by anything) and would have to be torn down and rebuilt from scratch on new foundations. The western wall seems to reach all the way down to the back of the ex-archaeological museum and its collapse could cause major damage. As it is the guard-building on its western side shows big cracks along a north-south line, all the way through the building. We could not access the archaeological museum premises under it, but they may show the same signs of deterioration on the same crack.

In addition, the causeway leading up to the gate on the outside would have to be entirely rebuilt, for right now it is simply inaccessible. I suggest a proper architectural study be made of this project by a competent team, with a new budget. Meanwhile we should continue to lobby to have the ammunition depot removed from the lower part of the citadel; this would be much easier of course if we had funds lined up to do the restoration work.

Presently it makes no sense to create an office space in the upper part of the citadel, if we have no direct access to it and would have to pass through the military installations to reach it. That's why I stopped the project.

#### Project 6: Jam minaret

I had the occasion to visit this isolated site again, and this time with a couple more hours to spend there. I also had longer discussions with the Jam Preservation Committee set up by Mr. Karimi from PGRO to follow-up on the first half of SPACH's project.

I climbed high into the mountains around the minaret to get a good overall view of the site; from there it is quite obvious that the Hari Rud has a straight left bank up to a distance of some 15 meters from the minaret, where it curves outward to meet the Jam Rud river. The flood protection wall should follow this line to avoid it coming under too much pressure of the springtime flash floods; the surface added at the foot of the minaret would be of a triangular shape, the right angle being at the intersection of the two rivers, the wall being about 8 meters long on the Jam Rud side and 25 meters on the Hari Rud side. From the base of the minaret to the river there would thus be at least 6 meters.

By walking in a semi-circle around the minaret high up in the mountains I also managed to determine, albeit in a rough manner, the direction of inclination of the minaret, which had eluded us earlier and foiled our attempts to measure its exact angle of inclination. The photographs should allow me to study the matter more closely.

Finally, I studied the illegal excavations more closely. These extend on both slopes around the minaret and are particularly extensive in a valley a bit further west, on the opposition side, which leads to Bidan. The excavations have picked up recently, and I saw some on the flat surface adjacent to the minaret which has been relatively untouched, though it would surely provide the greatest yields to the excavators. The Committee had stopped these excavations, incurring the wrath of the diggers, and I greatly appreciate their selfless efforts to stop the digging, as well as Gul Agha Karimi



who is their driving spirit. The excavations in question had revealed beautiful brickwork (flowershaped, probably from the same period as the minaret) both on the walls and on the floor of the excavated site. Along the riverbed one also sees several remains of brick walls and it is certain that excavating this flat surface adjacent to the minar (a triangle shape about 300 meter along the Hari Rud and 60 meter along the Jam Rud, with the minaret at its right angle) would yield very exciting finds. I and Gul Agha pressed that on the Committee, explaining that there were probably no valuable antiques there, but very important archaeological evidence which would allow specialists to reconstruct the famous Ghorid capital, Firuzkoh, adjacent to their village. A major source of income for the future generations of their village, if the site was not spoiled.

Appealing to their sense of patriotism and long-term resource creation for their community may not be enough, however, since Jam antiques are definitely in fashion, as I found out in Herat. While we were around the minaret four young people described as illegal diggers by community elders were waiting patiently to resume their work, and two pin-striped traders from Herat appeared, to find out if anything had been found recently. Since no one has the least trust in the government it is difficult to convince them that they should let the government excavate instead; only foreign-led excavations would be convincing.

In Jam village, which can be reached by truck since a local merchant had the road repaired, I inspected the future wheat storage facilities and made a contract with both the storekeeper and the local Sayed who will supervise the distribution of the wheat, making them both responsible for their respective areas. I had these contracts signed to avoid abuse, so far away from our permanent supervision.

There should be no major modifications to the costs of this project, in wheat and dollars. The gabions can be found in Herat after all (imported from Iran) which will be much cheaper than bringing them from Kabul. I propose however, for esthetic reasons, to continue the wooden gabion wall which seems so satisfactory along the Jam Rud side, and the metal gabions on the rougher Hari Rud side. Engineer Shafi agreed with this in principle. This week he is going to Jam with Gul Agha Karimi to make the exact plans, and he'll come up with the final cost estimations very soon.

While we're waiting for these final plans, the project in Jam can start, because the first part is clearing the natural dam formed by the Jam Rud river and creating a river diversion to lay the foundations of the gabion wall.

I've also suggested Engineer Shafi and Gul Agha Karimi to take care of the replanting of the trees cut for last years project; apparently there's a nursery in Kamenj, nearby, where saplings would be cheaper than transporting them from Herat, even if we can get them there free of charge. Some trees would be planted nearby (but not adjacent to) the existing wood-gabion wall, in the Jam Rud river bed, to provide extra flood protection and a nice setting. They would be irrigated by a little channel running between the trees and the floodprotection wall.

A little shack will be built for the tools, the guard and for making tea and lunch for the workers, who shall be busy up to Christmas probably.

Finally, Gul Agha Karimi and Eng. Shafi expressed their concerns about the legal framework of our project. Mawlawi Abdul Haqq declared that the Herat Department of Historical Monuments could not be held responsible for what we were doing in Ghor province. Gul Agha has an authorization from Hotaki to carry out the works (both parts) which he obtained himself, but it is a year old.

I did receive the verbal support of both Hotaki and the relevant authorities in Ghor, but this is obviously not enough. To get Hotaki to give us a letter of support I must employ someone from his ministry (the new procedure is to pay the salary to Hotaki, and the per diem to the employee, knowing he will not receive his salary). I was thinking of Engineer Mael, a serious young man who made the plans for Timur Shah Mausoleum and who I've selected for English language and computer training.

### Conclusion

All in all everything is going fine, because our team is dedicated to the job, getting along nicely together, and sufficiently competent (and cautious where experience is lacking). Most of my fears were allayed.

We must seriously revise the funding after getting the progress report and the technical plans for all remaining parts of the project from HAFO; we may have to turn to the WFP with a new request for wheat, too.

We must also be prepared to pay more salaries, for the project will surely last six months instead of four.

All other problems can be solved quite easily, and I will try to take care of them before my departure, on 30 October 2000.

END