

REPORT  
on the  
Site Selection  
for the  
Permanent Administrative Center  
of the  
HELMAND VALLEY AUTHORITY

U. S. Technical Cooperation Service  
to Afghanistan

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## HELMAND VALLEY AUTHORITY

### Report on Site Selection for the Administrative Center

#### Introduction

At the request of His Excellency, Abdulla Khan, President of the Helmand Valley Authority, studies have been made to ascertain the most appropriate location at which to develop the facilities required for the Administrative Center of the said Authority. The results of these investigations are presented herewith.

Inquiry was also made into the feasibility of constructing facilities to be temporarily occupied by the HVA and which could later be used to fulfill some permanent needs within the present project areas. It was found to be impractical to design and locate structures and facilities that could be economically usable for such diverse purposes. It became apparent that all facilities for HVA use, whether in the project areas or at the Administrative Center, should be built for permanent occupancy on the sites selected according to their functional place in the operational pattern.

#### General Background

The Helmand Valley Authority, established by governmental action in the fall of 1331 A.H. (1952 A.D.) is charged with the responsibility of directing the economic development of the Helmand watershed. The watershed contains, along with the Helmand River, the various major tributaries including the Arghandab, Tarnak and Dori rivers. It extends irregularly over three degrees of latitude and four and a half degrees of longitude. The geographic center is near Girishk.

The general functions of the Authority, as set forth officially, are as follows:

- a. Conservation and utilization of the national domain located in the Helmand Valley;
- b. Protection of the national interests in the Valley;
- c. Protection and development of land and the economic use of water resources;
- d. Control of the flow of the Helmand River and its tributaries;
- e. Consolidation of lands and the settlement of migratory peoples;
- f. Generation of electrical energy in the Helmand area.

Prior to the establishment of the Authority, the National government, utilizing the services of MKA, had been carrying on a long-term improvement program in the watershed. This plan included two large dams and several

canals. Kajakai Dam on the upper Helmand is nearly completed. The Boghra Canal, starting above Girishk city, now brings water to two major plains areas west of the Helmand River, known as Nad-i-ali and East Marja. An experimental farm has been developed at Fort Nad-i-ali itself. The Shamalan canal, taking off from the Boghra, follows south along the west side of the Helmand and brings improved water supply to the river valley area for some 65 kilometers. To the east, a large dam has been completed on the Arghandab north of Qandahar, which will permit the enlargement of land areas under cultivation in the lower valley. Another canal, the Seraj, takes water from the Helmand some 35 kilometers north of Girishk, and irrigates the lands on the eastern side of that river for a distance of over 70 kilometers. This was a government project entirely.

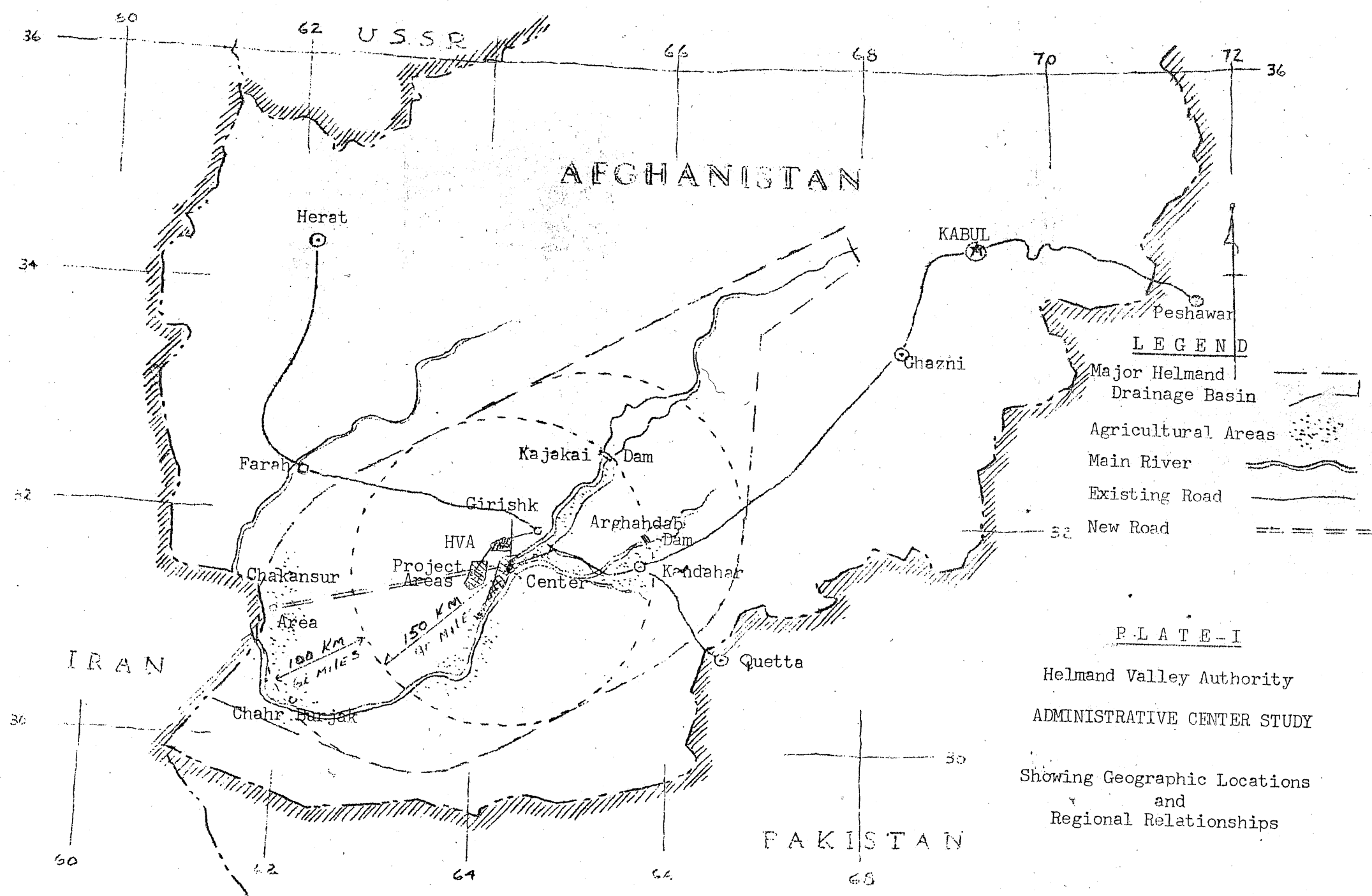
These aforesaid facilities and projects are now under the control and direction of the Helmand Valley Authority. These unrelated agencies previously in charge of various portions of the Valley improvement activities have been transferred to and incorporated in the Authority. In short, a central autonomous organization now exists to most efficiently plan, execute, and administer the economic development of one of Afghanistan's most important river systems. Further, this Authority has begun as an operating agency, with physical assets and programs already in existence, and it can be expected to grow and expand in proportion to the increasing tempo of the Valley development work.

The Authority, however, is still physically dispersed, with offices in Qandahar, Girishk and Fort Nad-i-ali. As a result, organizational work and staff development are seriously handicapped. These long lines of communication and control adversely affect operating efficiency and impose a heavy time-consuming travel schedule upon key personnel. Field offices will form a part of the work pattern but it is imperative that a center be established to provide the facilities for Authority Headquarters and the over-all administration of the Helmand Valley development programs. The purpose of this report is to recommend the most appropriate site location for such a center. The final recommendation is based on the following studies.

#### SITE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

##### I. Geographic Location

The location of the HVA Center should logically be related to the geographic center of its administrative jurisdiction, which roughly extends from Panjab on the north to Chahr Burjak on the south and from east of Qandahar



**LEGEND**

- Major Helmand Drainage Basin
- Agricultural Areas
- Main River
- Existing Road
- New Road

**PLATE-I**

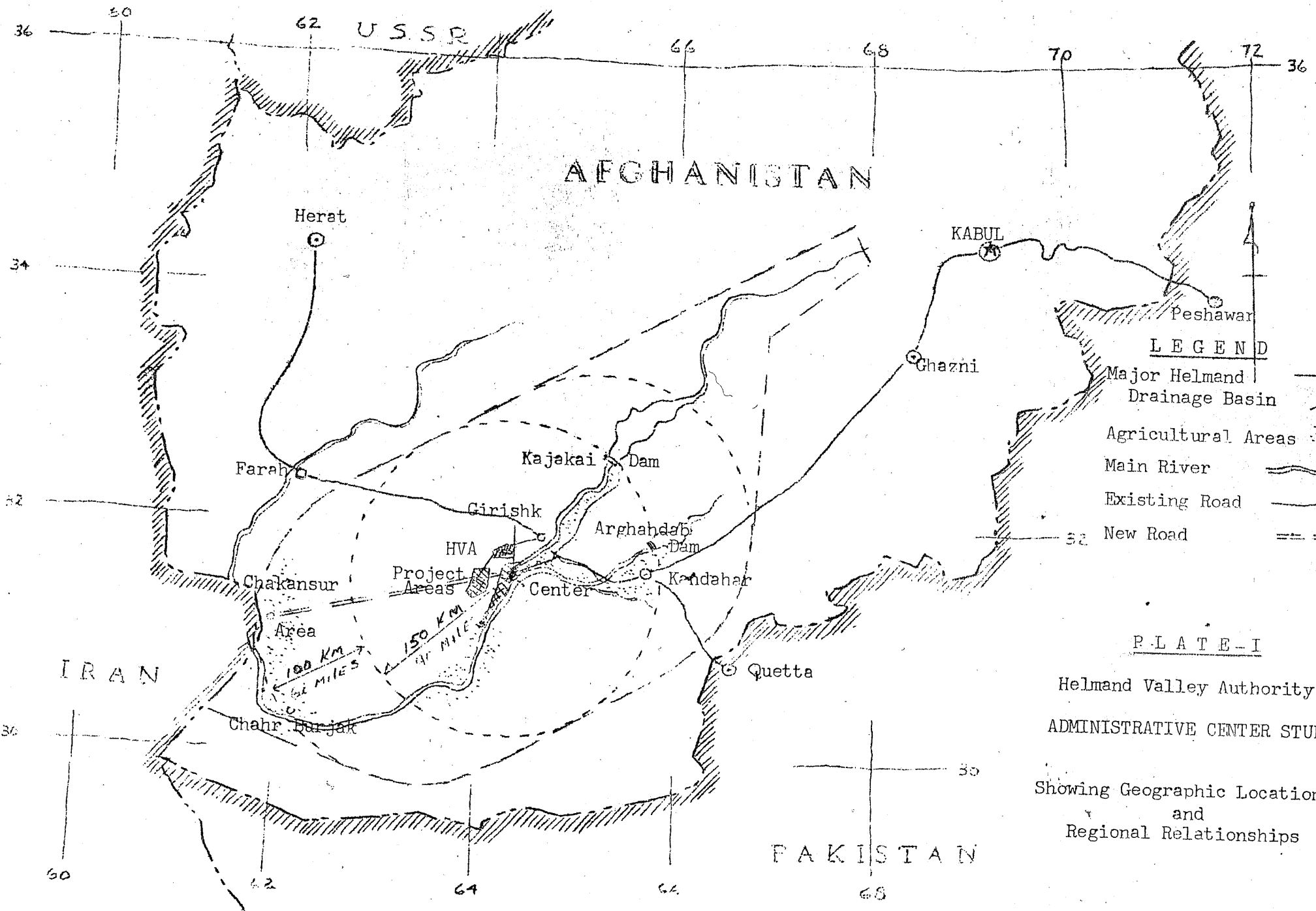
Helmand Valley Authority  
 ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER STUDY  
 Showing Geographic Locations  
 and  
 Regional Relationships

PAKISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

USSR

IRAN



Herat

KABUL

Peshawar

Chazni

Farah

Kajekai Dam

Girishk

Arghandab Dam

HVA Project Area Center

Kandahar

Chakansur Area

Quetta

Chahr-e-Buzjak

100 KM  
62 MILES

150 KM  
93 MILES

to Miarrah. This indicates a location somewhere south of Girishk. Within this area, a site should be chosen that is reasonably close and has easy access to the three major Helmand River development projects of Nad-i-ali, East Marja and the Shamalan. A river site, naturally would be most appropriate. (See Plate I.)

Since this location will also become a marketing center, it is necessary that the site be on either existing or possible main lines of communication within the region, and beyond. This is particularly important since the shortest route for bringing produce to market, whether for internal consumption or for export, will lower the cost to the consumer and save foreign exchange outlay for the country. Studies have shown that to operate a lorry, it costs at least ten cents in foreign exchange for gasoline, oils, tires, parts and vehicle for each kilometer of travel under normal conditions.

In this respect, a study was made of the traffic circulation within the Nad-i-ali, East Marja and Shamalan region and the logical farm-to-market network. Considered with this group was also the produce traffic that will originate in the Chakansur region when connected by road to the East Marja and that coming from additional Helmand Valley developments south of the Shamalan. (See Plate II.) It was found that the traffic lines were shortest when crossing the river north of its confluence with the Arghandab and proceeding directly east via Yakhchal. The Qalai Bust-Yakhchal road is developed to within 7 kilometers of Yakhchal, and will there connect with the direct route to Qandahar as well as the road north to Kajakai Dam. It should be noted that Qandahar is not necessarily the terminal point, but traffic going north to Kabul or east to Quetta must pass through this city.

Traffic taking this route to Qandahar will save 6 kilometers between the East Marja and Yakhchal and some 16 kilometers between the Shamalan area and the same town. The cost savings in foreign exchange per year is impressive. If a lorry made only one round trip per week from the Shamalan region, the operating costs would be reduced by some \$165 each year by using the shorter route. The missing connection in this regional farm-to-market road is a river crossing, which could be provided by either a ford, ferry or bridge. The least expensive crossing should be initially installed and could be replaced with a more appropriate structure when required by the future traffic demands. This artery when completed, will have additional regional economic value in that it will tie the Lower Saraj area into the regional pattern and will provide it with an outlet to markets, thereby stimulating increased agricultural productivity.