



FROM	Black Mountain Traders Mary Scott
TO	Richard Adams Richard Adams

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Message

Dear Mr. Adams,

I just got an e-mail from one of my contacts in Quetta. I would guess that you may already have this information but he says that with the ban the price of raw opium jumped from 4,000,000 to 100,000,000 afs. per kilo at the US\$ rate of 81,000. But as you mentioned, he suspects there is a big supply in storage and profits to be made by those holding the produce. He also said that except for the odd hidden fields behind walls, etc. the poppy ban seems to have held. The farmers are in fact afraid of the Taliban. No one in their right minds goes against the pronouncements.

The question is how long will the ban last? With no outside help with the transition from poppy to other cash crops, we can assume that after a time the ban will be lifted. And the Taliban will give the correct justification that politically they cannot continue the ban and no one helped. This in the context of Mullah Omer's pronouncement that poppy growing is un-Islamic. He might have a hard time going back on this pronouncement. I dont think he has before.

With dialogue and development aid, the ban may very well hold. At least a gesture of recognition of what has been done, with continuing dialogue would be a step in the right direction and there could be no justification to lift the ban.

I still think that a seed drop of vegetables, peanuts and perhaps a bit more cotton, like in 1999, would get their attention. \$20,000 to 25,000 in seed would be a major in-put. And all seeds should be sold at very reasonable prices, not free. It could be less seed and we would still get their attention and be the basis of constructive dialogue.

Combine this with some 90 days work for 1,000 men on the minor drains, which can be done during the warmer weather which starts about now, would also get their attention, if combined with continuous dialogue. It could be done through MCI, or cheaper the Afghan NGO, Helping Afghan Farmers Organization (HAFO), both of which I have worked with. I assume MCI still has the hand tools. I could put some of the details together if there would be an interest. Best Wishes, Dick Scott

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