

*Afghan General*

# POST REPORT

**USOM Afghanistan**

**1960**



February 9, 1961

SUPPLEMENT #1 TO AFGHANISTAN POST REPORT

In accordance ~~with~~ with TOICA A-770  
dated December 24, 1960, page 10, line 3 of the post  
report for USOM/Afghanistan is corrected to read:  
"(the time limit for this is 45 days.)"

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICIAL MISSION REPORT  
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

This is the Official Post Report prepared at the Mission; any other information you receive covering the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

Please report any indication of varying or contradictory information to the Recruitment Branch, Office of Personnel, Washington, D. C., in order that the Official Post Report may be clarified or verified.

March, 1960

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PART I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Pertains to Kabul and vicinity; Lashkar Gah and Kandahar are covered in Part VIII)

a. Climate

One of the chief characteristics of Afghanistan's climate is a clear, blue, cloudless sky with daily sunshine throughout most of the year. The climatic conditions are governed to a large extent by altitude, and vary from alpine in the highest mountains to desert in the south. Few meteorological data are available, except for Kabul, at an elevation of 6,000 feet, with a mean annual temperature of 58-60 degrees Fahrenheit. The winters are cold, and summers are hot and dry. Most of the precipitation occurs during the winter and early spring, when snow and rain are frequent. However, the annual average rainfall for the entire country does not exceed ten or eleven inches.

The high temperatures of midday during the summer months (June through October) vanish with the setting sun and the nights are cool and comfortable. Even the chill of winter is softened by the bright sunshine. Unfortunately, this healthful invigorating climate is somewhat marred by heavy dust blown in by summer winds from the arid, barren hills surrounding Kabul. In winter and spring the muddy streets create difficult transportation problems.

b. Description of Post

Afghanistan is a land of rugged beauty and sharp contrasts - of desert wastes and lush green valleys - a remote mountainous area of 246,000 square miles that stretches across the towering heights of Central Asia. This vast land-locked plateau, approximately the size of Texas, is bounded on the north by Soviet Russia, on the east and south by Pakistan, and on the west by Iran, with very short stretches of joint boundary with Communist China and India in the northeast.

The country is dominated topographically by the lofty snow-capped ranges of the Hindu Kush, an extension of the Himalayas. Its mountainous terrain limits easy access to Kabul except through several passes. The most frequently used routes are from Peshawar via the famed Khyber Pass and Jalalabad and through the Kabul River Gorge, or over the Lataband Pass, a distance of 185 miles to Kabul. For centuries these ancient trails have been traversed by invading armies and nomadic tribes making their way into the rich plains of the south. Through these passes came Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane (Timur).

Archaic walled villages of low brown mud houses are wedged in the mountain canyons and agriculture flourishes where irrigation is possible. In these valleys may be found fruit trees, grain fields, and flowers growing in profusion. The apricots, mulberries, almonds, walnuts, pistachio nuts, pomegranates and grapes of more than thirty varieties are products of exceptionally high quality. Melons, grown in almost every irrigated section of Afghanistan, are renowned for lusciousness and flavor. Other fruits grown are cherries, apples, loquats, peaches, pears, plums, oranges and grapefruit. Caution must be exercised to be certain that all fresh fruits are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before eating.

Side by side with high-speed automobiles are the slow-moving caravans of the nomadic tribes which comprise approximately 2,000,000 persons out of a total population of about 12,000,000. Colorful, dramatic and purposeful, these caravans include hordes of camels, men, women, children, donkeys, sheep, goats, oxen, and even chickens perched precariously atop cargoes of valuable merchandise, methodically wending their way southward from the Oxus and Hindu Kush country in autumn to return again in early spring. This journey is not a venture of whim or fancy but one of enterprise. Along the way they help to harvest wheat crops, and their herds of cattle, sheep and goats are grazed. Also by this means rich cargoes of silks, teas, spices, beautiful carpets, lambskins and karakul are merchandised or transported across the borders, for today as yesterday, Afghanistan exchanges its goods with the outside world.

The people of Afghanistan are a strong and sturdy race. They are proud of bearing, have a keen sense of humor, and their love of freedom is traditional. Their hospitality toward foreigners has won them the international reputation of a friendly people. Because approximately 90% of the income of the country is derived from agricultural and pastoral pursuits, the Afghan farmer and herdsman must of necessity be independent and resourceful. He extracts from a worn-out and often rocky soil, by primitive methods, an adequate subsistence and enough surplus to permit trade in the world market. There are relatively few beggars. Uncompromising tribal laws and customs, including vendetta, are the rules of life.

Islam, the religion of Mohammed, is the official creed of the country and the faith of practically the entire population. The precepts and interpretations of the Koran form the basis of civil laws and influence legal decisions governing property and moral rights of the people. The purdah system, which dictates that women cannot appear on the streets or outside the home without the chadre, a garment which completely shrouds the body from head to foot with a small latticed aperture for the eyes, is being relaxed by Government example, and women are enjoying more freedom than they have known for many years.

Persian, or Farsi, is the language most commonly spoken in Afghanistan, although Pushtu is considered the official language of the country. English, French, and German are commonly spoken among groups of government officials and businessmen. For the past several years the Ministry of Education has been inviting American teachers to Afghanistan with the result that an increasing proportion of the younger generation have become quite fluent in English. With the initiation of a scholarship program by the Royal Afghan Government and with the help of the ICA education programs, many English-speaking students have been selected for further academic training in agriculture, medicine, public health, engineering, etc. in colleges and universities of the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Afghanistan is a constitutional monarchy with a King, Senate, and a National Assembly, the latter composed of representatives from the provinces. The Senate is comprised of members selected by the King for life. According to the constitution of the country, the throne is hereditary. The present King is His Majesty Mohammed Zahir Shah.



Kabul, the capital city, with a population estimated at 300,000, is a busy, thriving metropolis. It is located in the eastern section of the country, 140 miles from the Pakistan border on a high plateau, through the center of which flows the Kabul River. With the melting snows and spring rains this river becomes a torrent of considerable volume, but dwindles to a tiny, sluggish stream during summer drought.

As the seat of government, Kabul has several imposing buildings which include Parliament House, the King's Palace, various Ministry buildings, the Kabul Museum, Bank de Mille, Ghazi High School, and others. The several Embassy compounds, with their high mud walls, offer pleasant surprises, as the interiors have fine gardens and houses of gracious, hospitable proportions.

First impressions of the bazaars (shops) are not alluring by western standards of display and cleanliness, but they certainly are picturesque. The supply and variety of merchandise fluctuates seasonally and in ratio to transportation both in and out of the country. This is a hazardous activity, greatly affected by border disputes, weather and road conditions.

#### c. Nearby Places of Interest

Babar's Garden. Only 1-1/2 miles from the outskirts of Kabul lies this terraced garden of flowers, streams and shrubbery. The tomb of Babar, one of the Mogul Emperors of India, stands in the eastern corner of the grounds. Of interest to tree lovers and horticulturists are two large old panja chinar trees, probably dating from Mogul days, standing like sentinels near the tomb.

Paghman, a village in the foothills of the Paghman Range, is about 17 miles northwest of Kabul. The King's summer palace is located here. The clean, colorful atmosphere and beautiful foliage of this typical mountain resort offers a welcome respite from the dust-laden streets of Kabul during the summer months; it is a favorite spot for hikes and picnics.

The King's Gardens in Paghman are extensive and beautifully designed, and are open to the public when the King is not in residence.

Istalif, about 30 miles from Kabul, is a city of steep hills and magnificent vistas. It is here that the well-known blue-green pottery originated and is still made by hand on ancient potter's wheels. The unusually attractive color of the glaze and the crude shapes of the bowls and vases have remained unchanged for centuries. Another interesting feature of Istalif is the coin dealers who sell old Greek coins, discovered in the nearby valley, a former stronghold of Alexander.

Bamian, about 160 miles northwest of Kabul, a valley of massive relics of the Buddhist era, is a mecca for historians and archeologists. The enormous figures of Buddha carved from solid rock walls of the Bamian Gorge, and the cliffs honey-combed with stupas once used by Buddhist monks, are convincing remnants of an ancient culture.

#### d. Location of the ICA Mission

The headquarters offices of the Mission are located in the Kart-i-Se section of Kabul about 3-1/2 miles from the American Embassy. The headquarters buildings are situated on Darul Amon Road, the main street leading to the Parliament Building. About 3/8 of a mile distant, in a large compound, are the dispensary, general services offices, warehouse, motor pool, and other facilities.

The Columbia and Wyoming University contract personnel offices are located nearby, and other contract teams are scattered around Kabul in various Ministry and other Afghan Government buildings.

The scheduled work week for the Mission is Monday through Thursday, and Saturday from 0800 to 1715, with one hour and fifteen minutes for lunch. Fridays and Sundays are non-work days, as Friday is the Moslem Sabbath.

## PART II - RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

### a. Sports and Outdoor Life

Tennis. For the sportsman Kabul presents several attractions. During the spring and throughout the summer many are to be found at the tennis courts, either participating in or watching the matches. Several of the diplomatic missions have private courts and welcome players from the community. Tournaments are organized by individual missions or clubs, with open participation. The matches are followed with interest by the community. Courts are of clay or concrete with the exception of two grass ones at the British Embassy, normally reserved for tournament playing. Tennis players must bring their own equipment: at least two tennis rackets, a supply of balls, at least two pairs of tennis shoes, and white outfits (white is compulsory). There are a few local experts who will restring rackets for a nominal fee. Balls and excellent rackets can be obtained from Pakistan.

Hiking. At the first sign of spring, hikers can be seen climbing the low mountains surrounding the city of Kabul. For the more experienced climbers there are excellent opportunities for climbs of up to fifteen thousand feet, 15 to 20 miles from the city. Farther away are peaks rising to more than twenty thousand feet. The latter require a long drive by car, and then a long hike or horseback ride.

Softball - Volleyball. During the Afghan National Independence Celebration in August the softball, volleyball, basketball, soccer and hockey teams of the diplomatic missions and Afghan schools compete with each other or with teams from other countries. The U. S. Army Attache Office has softball equipment and a volleyball court. In addition, the Afghan Olympic Association holds ping-pong tournaments which are open to the foreign community. Several individuals have organized badminton matches, and squash may be played at the British Embassy by invitation.

Swimming is limited in Kabul; however, there are several pools available - at the International Club, at the King's Farm (Karez Mir), and at Rish Koor, which is a fine spot for picnicking. There are a few lakes and rivers within approximately fifty miles of Kabul which provide opportunities for swimming and fishing.

Horseback Riding. For centuries Afghanistan has been known for its excellent horses. Horses and donkeys can be rented by the day for approximately \$1.00, depending on the length and type of trip. Horses can be purchased for \$80.00 and up, and \$30.00 per month should cover costs for feeding and a groom. Donkeys are very inexpensive - about \$6.00 for a young one - and make wonderful pets for children. Riders should bring saddles and other riding equipment with them.



Camping and Hunting. Good camping sites can be found from one to three days' drive from Kabul. In the northern part of the country fish are said to be plentiful, including some trout. Game includes ibex, gazelle, deer, wild boar and mountain sheep, which are found mostly in the Hindu Kush area, in addition to duck, pigeon, partridge, quail and pheasant. Hunters and anglers should bring a good supply of ammunition and equipment.

Bicycling. As a means of transportation and for recreational purposes, bicycles are useful in Kabul. There are good picnic areas within cycling distance of the city, as well as parks, the Kabul Museum, and bazaars. Many of the bazaar streets are so narrow they are impassable to automobiles. Good British bicycles in the bazaar, when available, cost about \$50.00 or more.

Skating. During winter, if there is plenty of snow, there is skiing and tobogganing on the slopes surrounding Kabul. Enthusiasts can plan to ski approximately four months out of the year. The Kabul Ski Club maintains a Ski Lodge, with a ski tow, a short distance from Kabul; it is a popular gathering-place on weekends during the season.

Golf. Kabul now has a nine-hole golf course with sand greens, a short distance from the city. Formed early in 1959, the Kabul Golf Club consists of Afghans and members of the foreign colony, with nominal annual dues and stock subscription charges. Various competitions are held during the year, including Men's and Women's Open Championships and Handicap Championship. Golf can be played approximately nine months of the year. Again, all equipment for the game should be brought.

Sports Equipment. There is little recreational equipment for sale in Kabul. It is possible, however, to construct ping-pong tables, seesaws, swings, etc., out of local lumber. A light down sleeping bag and air mattress are essential for overnight travel, and are highly recommended if one plans to do any distance driving.

#### b. Social Activities and Entertainment

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of being in a small post such as Kabul is the opportunity to develop friendships with people of approximately 21 different countries. The foreign community numbers well over a thousand, including about 600 Americans. The post is isolated, travel out of the city is infrequent, and the same people are met very often.

A large part of the social life can be compared to that found in small towns in the United States. There is no commercial entertainment or recreation; no operas, concerts, recreation centers, playgrounds, night clubs. Recreation is planned and organized by individuals or small groups, and centers around private homes in the foreign community and occasionally in an Afghan home. Entertaining at home includes cocktail parties, teas, buffet dinners, bridge, sewing circles, slide and film showings, and play readings.

Note to single people: living alone in Kabul requires adaptability and resourcefulness, to compensate for the complete lack of entertainment facilities one is accustomed to in the United States.

On an average, and depending on the individual, USOM personnel will be invited out or will entertain twice a week. Attending these parties, in most cases, will be members of the Mission, a few Afghan coworkers, and members of the diplomatic missions or United Nations. Because of the traditional segregation of Afghan men and women, except within the immediate family circle, there are very few opportunities for mixed social life with Afghans. Occasionally, western men and women may be invited to an Afghan home for dinner or a wedding. Women are sometimes invited to tea. Western men and women are often invited to large formal dinners or garden parties sponsored by the Afghan Government Ministries, and Afghan women are now beginning to appear at these functions.

There are two cinema houses in Kabul which are patronized by the foreign community. On the whole, good recent films are shown. With the courtesy of USIS and Air Attache facilities, the American community enjoys film showings frequently.

The foreign community has organized the Kabul Amateur Dramatic Society which meets once a month and presents some excellent and very enjoyable entertainment. Membership is open to the community.

There are no English publications in Kabul, except brief daily news bulletins distributed by USIS. Personnel should subscribe to their favorite publications before coming here. Books and magazines sent by surface mail arrive in Kabul after two or three months. International editions of Time, Newsweek, and The New York Times sent by air mail are approximately one week to ten days old. There are no public libraries in Kabul, and no book stores. The USIS Library offers a good selection of popular books, magazines, and newspapers, and is available to all Mission personnel. If you have a supply of current magazines, it is recommended that they be brought along; newsprint from home becomes very precious.

Recommended reading (either before or after arrival):

Afghanistan, Sir W. K. Fraser-Tytler  
Afghanistan, Donald N. Wilber  
The Pathans, Sir Olaf Caroe  
The Past Present, Edward Hunter  
The Narrow Smile, Peter Mayne  
An American Engineer in Afghanistan, Marjorie Jewett Bell  
After You, Marco Polo, Shor  
West of the Indus, Douglas  
National Geographic Magazines, Volumes 60 (1931), 64 (1933),  
90 (1946), 98 (1950), and 114 (1958) contain articles and  
photographs of Afghanistan

The International Club provides a meeting place for Afghans and the foreign community. Its facilities include a dining room, bar, small library and music room, catering service, tennis courts, ping-pong, badminton, and a swimming pool. Dances are held weekly. Membership is open to all for a fee of approximately \$5.00 per month plus an initiation fee of about \$20.00.

The Kabul Museum has a fine general collection of Afghan artifacts, as well as the most comprehensive collection in the world of Baghran ivory, noted for its excellence, and fine collections of Greco-Bactrian and Buddhist art.

Archeological research teams from France, Germany, and the United States are constantly making new discoveries in this field.

The American Society of Kabul, known as TASK, was organized to provide financial and moral assistance to community welfare. Committees are helping to reorganize and facilitate the establishment of Afghanistan's Cottage Industries, playgrounds and recreation centers for the community, and the like. The Society also sponsors occasional social activities for the American community.

The new USOM Staff House, in addition to accommodations for newcomers and transients, is used as a meeting place and social center for USOM personnel. Dining facilities for "cook's-night-out" and special parties are available. Plans are under way for such recreational facilities as tennis courts, shuffleboard courts, and barbecues.

Radio reception is poor in Afghanistan. There is one local radio station, but a good short-wave receiver is required to enjoy a western program.

Camera enthusiasts should bring all equipment and an ample supply of film. Film can be obtained in the bazaar, but it is expensive. Developing and printing facilities for black and white film are available, as well as limited facilities for color film. Quality is fair.

There are two sewing groups which sew for the local hospitals. Membership is open to women of the foreign community.

#### c. Recreation for Children

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that children's toys, books, and recreational facilities must be brought to Kabul. Items like Christmas and birthday presents are practically unobtainable in Kabul. The whole family can make good use of a sled during the winter months. There are organized groups of Cub Scouts, Brownies, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. The Community Church sponsors outings and social functions for the young people.

### PART III. HOUSING

#### a. Available Quarters

All residences of ICA and contract employees are government-leased. Basic furnishings are provided, including a cook stove, refrigerator, heating stoves, draperies, rugs and furniture for an average-sized living room, dining room and bedrooms, and a transformer. Costs of rent, heat and utilities are assumed by the U. S. Government for government-leased quarters.

The Mission tries to have a number of houses ready for immediate inspection on arrival of personnel. However, this is not always possible. Most of the houses must be remodeled to make them suitable for western occupancy, and this requires considerable time and ingenuity. Assignment of housing is by bid. Each employee acquires a certain number of points by virtue of the size of his family, his grade, and time at post. Twice each month all available houses are opened for bid. In case two or more persons bid on the same house, the

one with the highest number of points is awarded the house. Single persons may bid on houses singly or in conjunction with another single person. Newly arrived personnel are housed temporarily in the USOM Staff House. As a general rule, large families are placed temporarily in a vacant house, until they can acquire a permanent residence.

The typical Kabul house is located within a compound enclosed by high mud brick walls. Most compounds have a spacious yard, with shade and fruit trees. Many residents plant vegetable and flower gardens, with excellent results. Gardens are watered from the ditches which flow along the streets of the city.

Houses are constructed of either unbaked mud brick or fired brick, with walls about 30 inches thick. The flat roofs are of mud mixed with straw which is smoothed down and refinished each year. They often leak during the rainy season and require resurfacing. Many government-leased houses are improved with an asphalt coating for the mud roof or with a sheetmetal roof. Floors are usually a mud-cement mixture; marble or tile floors are sometimes found in the living rooms and bathrooms. Some bathrooms have tubs, but many have only showers. Interior walls are usually finely surfaced mud, resembling plaster; most rooms have ornate wood ceilings and many small windows. Ceilings are high and general construction provides cool interiors during the summer months. Houses are heated by stoves (wood and/or kerosene) during the winter. Servants' quarters and storerooms normally adjoin the house.

Most Afghan houses are of one-story construction and few have basements. They generally consist of a living room, dining room, kitchen, sunroom or patio (called gulkhana - "house of flowers"), bathroom, two or more bedrooms, and a great deal of unusable space in halls and odd rooms.

b. Household Effects and Equipment to be Brought from U. S.

Because of the lack of commercial entertainment and recreational facilities in this country, personnel spend most of their spare hours at home, entertaining or occupied with hobbies. As a result, they try to make their homes as comfortable as possible. As stated, only the basic furnishings are provided, and it is recommended that families bring to the post additional accessories to add to comfort and appearance, such as bridge table and chairs, TV trays, vases, and pictures.

However, it is strongly recommended that articles of great value not be brought, because of the considerable hazards of shipping and the high incidence of careless handling by servants. Afghan servants must be taught to use many of our common household items; in fact, they use their own implements to better advantage in everyday cleaning tasks.

The following is a suggested list of items which will be useful. If employees do not already own household goods, they probably can acquire here what they will need to make their homes comfortable. Families leaving the post often sell such household items, and many of these things are available in the bazaar.



Upper:  
USOM/A Office Buildings

Upper Right:  
USOM/A Infirmary

Remaining photos show typical homes  
in Kabul







Above:

Afghanistan is famous for its Persian Lamb skins (Caracul).

Upper Left:

A number of well stocked Afghan Grocery Stores are in the community.

Left:

Afghanistan is well known for its many varieties of fruits in season.

Lower Left:

A well stocked commissary is available for USOM/A personnel.

Lower:

Afghan rugs of excellent quality can be purchased in the rug shops of Kabul.







Upper: Children at Nursery School.

Upper Right: American School in Kabul.

Right: USOM/A Motor Pool and one of the warehouses.

Lower Right: Up to 8-lb trout caught in the Hindu Kush Mountain Area.

Below: Camping at Band-i-Amir Lake 250 miles from Kabul.





Typical interiors of homes  
of USOM/A personnel in Kabul.

The children enjoy the many parties  
which are part of the mission's  
social life.



## Linens

Table linens (mats of a durable nature recommended)

Bed linens (beds are mostly single; Dacron or Acrilan blankets recommended)

Pillows

Bath mats, toilet seat covers, shower curtain

(Bath towels, tea towels, dish cloths, curtain and upholstery materials can be obtained locally)

## Housewares

Cooking utensils of a hardy variety; useful items are Dutch oven, bread pans, rolling pin, iron skillet, pressure cooker, egg beater, covered cooking dishes (to maintain heat)

Can openers, knife sharpener, meat grinder, ice crushers, tongs for lifting food from boiling water, durable knives with wooden handles

Chafing dishes, serving dishes

Silverware, dishes, glassware (inexpensive variety recommended)

Food storage containers, plastic dish covers, refrigerator dishes

Plastic or other food bags, for bazaar purchases

Candle holders, soda water dispensers (cartridges available in Commissary)

Set of household tools, padlocks

Garment bags, plastic protectors, etc. (useful against smoke and dust)

Thermos bottles or jugs

Cleaning implements - extra mop heads, dust cloths, etc.

## Appliances

Vacuum cleaner (in good condition)

Electric iron and ironing board with pad

Shortwave radio, record player and records

Non-automatic washing machine (with spare parts)

Sewing machine

Rotisserie (not a necessity, but nice to have, as kerosene stoves do not have broilers)

## Notions

Ample supply of note paper, stationery, greeting cards

Inexpensive gifts, wrapping paper, Christmas decorations

Ribbon, bridge favors, etc.

Sewing kit, including zippers, threads (local thread is very poor quality), buttons, patterns

Men's shirt collars and buttons

Shower cap and clogs

An air freight shipment of bedding and kitchen ware for immediate use is recommended; the Property Office can supply only a limited amount of these articles, and ocean freight takes months to arrive.

Many housewives recommend that any unused allowances be utilized with a supply of any of the following items, all of which are in limited supply and/or at least twice the normal cost: soap, tooth paste or powder, coffee, powdered milk, vitamins, favorite foods. On the other hand, some women feel that one

should wait until after arrival at post to see what is most needed or wanted, and then make use of the unused household effects allowance by placing an order (the time limit for this is six months).

### c. Facilities

Fuel. There is no central heating in Kabul. Wood and kerosene stoves are used for heating; the stoves are removed in the spring and stored until fall.

There are some electric cooking stoves, but many people prefer the dependability of kerosene. Kerosene stoves have no broilers, although they do have ovens.

Water. Most houses have a well and an electric pump which provides water for bathing and general use. During winter, pipes and pump must be protected from freezing. Water is heated in tanks which have a firebox for wood underneath; a tank of water can be heated in about thirty minutes. Tanks are normally located in the bathroom and/or kitchen.

All drinking water must be boiled twenty minutes. Most families drink the boiled well water; however, some prefer to fetch pure drinking water in containers from the deep well at the Embassy.

Sanitation. Western plumbing is available in government-leased houses. Materials and installation are poor and result in frequent leakage and clogging.

Telephone. Internal telephone service is only fair. Many Mission personnel do not have home telephones; as a result, communication is often made by hand-carried note. Supplies of printed invitation forms and cards for informal invitations are recommended. Stationery, printing and engraving are not available in Afghanistan.

Dry Cleaning and Laundry. There are commercial dry cleaning facilities in Kabul but they are not modern. Dry cleaning usually consists of soaking clothes in gasoline, which leaves an odor requiring much airing before they can be worn.

For laundry most families employ a dhobi (laundry man), who comes to the home as often as necessary to wash and iron.

Electricity. Kabul has 220-volt, 50-cycle alternating current. Transformers are furnished which convert the entire house to the 110 volts needed for all U. S.-made appliances. However, it should be noted that U. S.-made appliances generally require 110 volts, 60 cycles. Items such as washing machines, record players and tape recorders may need conversion to 50 cycles; it would be wise to check with your local appliance store before packing such appliances. Electric clocks and timers cannot be used satisfactorily in Kabul.

### d. Temporary Quarters

Although the Mission makes every effort to provide permanent quarters for personnel shortly after arrival at the post, in most cases new arrivals are housed temporarily in the USOM Staff House. Accommodations are limited to U. S. Government employees and their dependents (including contract personnel),

and a nominal charge is made for meals and service: for USOM-assigned personnel, \$2.25 per day for meals (children under twelve half price), \$1.25 per week for service.

Room accommodations at the Kabul Hotel are considered adequate; however, Mission personnel normally are not housed there due to dining inadequacies.

Newly arrived personnel normally are met at the airport; however, should it happen that a new arrival is not met, he should telephone the USOM office (22411) or, if the office is closed, the American Embassy (20470), so that an automobile may be sent to pick him up. If there is transportation available at the airport, the new arrival may proceed directly to the USOM Staff House, where the manager will provide accommodations for him.

#### PART IV - FOOD, CLOTHING, AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNITY FACILITIES

##### a. Food

It is possible to buy many essential foods from the bazaar. However, deficiencies in quality and variety of meats, vegetables, and fruits at certain seasons make it difficult to maintain a healthy diet. All vegetables must be washed with detergents because of contamination in cultivation and handling, and must be cooked twenty minutes, after which a part of the vitamin content is lost. Available year-round are eggs, lamb, mutton, goat, beef, chicken, sugar, rice, flour, raisins, nuts, potatoes, onions, and carrots. Other fruits and vegetables are seasonal. During winter ducks, partridge, turkey, pigeon, and some fish are available and offer a variety from the generally poor quality beef and mutton. Dairy products are not pasteurized and local milk is frequently diluted with water; many cows are diseased and livestock or meat inspection does not exist.

Some imported canned goods, including butter, shortening, coffee, meats, powdered milk, fruits, cheese, soups, and vegetables can be purchased in the bazaar; however, they are expensive - at least double U. S. prices - and in some cases are old and spoiled.

Bazaars do not provide wrapping paper or any container for purchases; the customer must bring his own.

The American Embassy Commissary has been operating since 1953. It is a voluntary cooperative, owned entirely by the members. Because of the constant increase of personnel at the post and the delay in transporting goods into Kabul, it has not been possible to maintain a continuously well-stocked Commissary and to satisfy completely all the needs of all personnel. Participation is voluntary and limited to U. S. Government and contract employees. Capital contributions required of each member are 4% of base salary plus post differential, plus 3% for each member of the family over 18 and 1% for each member under that age. Maximum capital investment is \$700 per family, which is required to be paid within 90 days after arrival at the post, in monthly installments of not less than 1/3 the total amount each month. This investment is refunded on final departure from the post. Prices at the Commissary are 50-60% above U. S. retail prices. It is not possible to shop at the Commissary unless one is a member, or a visitor who may purchase a visitor's card.



It must be emphasized that an initial supply of special food for babies should be shipped in accompanied air baggage.

b. Clothing

Personnel coming to Kabul will require a four-season, practical, and simple wardrobe to last for two years. Crude laundry methods and hard water cause washables to wear out quickly. There are many unpaved streets in Kabul, which are muddy or icy in winter, and dusty in summer. Shoes wear out very quickly; sturdy boots or rubbers are a necessity.

Women's Clothing. In summer, emphasis should be placed on simple cotton dresses, skirts and blouses. Synthetic materials which are durable and can be washed often are useful. Sleeveless and/or backless dresses should be accompanied by jackets for streetwear; bare arms and backs in public are not considered appropriate. Even in summer, a sweater is often needed.

For evening wear, several cocktail dresses, including cotton for summer, can be used. If you have a long formal, bring it, but it is not a necessity. Stoles, short jackets, and evening sweaters are needed for the cool summer and fall nights, for indoors during the winter, and for use with decollete dresses at Afghan parties. Hats and gloves are worn at formal garden and afternoon parties, teas, luncheons, etc. Two basic seasonal hats are adequate.

During the winter, offices and homes are sometimes inadequately heated. Warm footgear, heavy wool skirts and sweaters are good for everyday wear. Washable wool is very useful. Warm headgear, such as hood or ski cap, at least one heavy winter coat, a good raincoat, and warm gloves are essential. Fur stoles and coats are fine for winter use, if you feel you can store them properly during the summer. Winter sports clothes, such as ski pants, wind-proof jacket, etc. should be brought if you plan to be outdoors. Warm, clever "at home" clothes are morale boosters for long winter evenings.

For the swimmer, several bathing suits can be used; if you plan to play tennis, at least two sets of tennis dresses and shoes (all white), and a good straw hat. Shorts and halters are worn only within compound walls.

Excellent British woolens are available in the bazaar; there are many tailors, and their work is adequate. Imported nylon hose are available; colors are limited and prices average about \$1.50 per pair. Rubber boots and fur-lined stadium boots are available locally.

A two-year supply of shoes should be brought to the post. Comfortable walking styles are most desirable for work. Buckskin and suede are recommended for best wearing qualities. Plenty of dress shoes are needed, for cocktail parties and dancing, and sandals for summer wear. Bring some kind of protective overshoes to lengthen the life of such shoes.

Men's Clothing. Dress for work is comparable to that worn in the U. S. in a climate similar to that of Denver, Colorado. Seersucker or cord suits are advisable for summer wear, as they can be washed. For winter, fine British woolens are available at reasonable prices, and men's tailoring is fairly good and inexpensive. A two-year supply of underwear, socks, ties and shirts should be brought, although such things as nylon stretch socks are available in the local bazaar.



Dress clothes are necessary for those who will be required to attend diplomatic and Afghan Government affairs. A dark suit is usually acceptable for all other occasions; however, if you have a dress suit, bring it.

A heavy topcoat, raincoat and head coverings are required. Sports attire for trips should be of the hardest variety, with jackets for cold and rainy nights. At least two sets of tennis, riding, and skiing clothes should be brought by persons planning to participate in these sports.

A two-year supply of shoes - daytime, hiking, riding and skiing boots, shower clogs, and shoes for dress - should be brought to the post.

For field technicians, normal work clothes, khaki and denim, are suitable; however, the work locale should be considered, that is, desert, mountainous, etc. In such cases, sun-glasses, cork helmet, or cold weather clothing might apply.

Children's Clothing. A two-year supply of clothing and all requirements should be brought, including play pen for babies, toys, medicines, special foods, etc. Changes in size must be anticipated, especially in the matter of shoes. A collapsible stroller is useful. Some imported children's clothes are available in the bazaar; however, they are expensive.

#### c. Servants

Depending on the size of family and individual requirements, one or more servants are a practical necessity in Afghanistan in order to maintain a household with few modern conveniences. More and more servants are available who have worked previously for Americans, and are trained in our ways and can speak some English. However, all servants must be carefully supervised, and usually require considerable training.

The cook, who is paid \$30 to \$45 a month, is in charge of the kitchen, prepares the meals, and purchases food from the bazaar.

The bearer, paid \$25 to \$40, serves meals, takes care of clothes, sees that the house is clean, makes beds, and takes care of any personal errands required.

The bacha (boy), paid from \$15 to \$25, cleans the house, builds fires in the cooking and heating stoves, maintains the garden (some people retain a separate gardener), and performs other odd jobs.

The nana (nurse) takes care of children and normally has nothing to do with running the household.

In addition, a dhobi (laundryman) is required once or twice a week. Most families prefer to have the dhobi launder at the house, where hot water and modern detergents are available.

Servants expect to receive as a gift a fourth of their monthly salary on each of four religious holidays a year. Also in addition to salary, it is customary to give them money for food and medicine, and some old clothing.

Prior to hiring a servant, inquiries should be made about his reputation, past employment, etc. Servants usually present several written recommendations to their prospective employers; however, these recommendations are not always reliable because the better ones are exchanged among servants or purchased in the bazaar. Prior to engagement, a servant must have a police work permit and a physical examination, including serology and X-ray.

d. Education

There are two grade schools in Kabul which are widely attended by American children:

The International School is a cooperative operated by representatives of the major organizations of the foreign community. The pupils, half of whom are American, come from many different nations, as do the teachers. All children in the third grade and up are given instruction in French as well as in music, art, and handicrafts. Tuition, which includes all books and supplies, is \$20 per month for nursery and kindergarten, \$35 per month for 1st and 2nd grades, \$45 per month for 3rd through 6th grades, and \$50 per month for 7th and 8th grades. There is also a \$10 deposit for each child, which is returned when the child leaves school. The school year begins in September; there are six-week vacations during the winter and summer.

The American Christian School is privately governed by a Board of Trustees. The teachers are all American, qualified by education and experience. The school is Protestant Christian, with two periods of Bible study per week, but accepts children of other faiths. Tuition, including books and supplies, is \$25 per month for kindergarten, and \$45 per month for all other grades. The school term is from September to June, with a two-week vacation at Christmas.

In 1959 the Kabul International High School was established. It is run on a cooperative basis, with parents sharing the responsibilities. Administration is under a Board of Directors. Enrollment is open to anyone who has sufficient knowledge of English to handle the work. 90% of the students are American. Classes are offered in subjects which are required for college admission in the United States. The school year is from September to June, with a long midwinter vacation. Tuition is \$600 per year, payable in three installments. A deposit of \$200 is required from each family, 90% of which is returned upon withdrawal of the student. The government school allowance practically covers the tuition.

Some high school students attend boarding schools in the United States, Europe, or India. Information on such institutions should be obtained before coming to the post.

e. Churches

Roman Catholic services are conducted at the Italian Legation each Sunday. Appropriate masses are observed on holy days.

Non-denominational Protestant services are held each Sunday at the home of the Reverend Dr. J. Christy Wilson. Children may attend Sunday School during the church service.

f. Miscellaneous

If you have favorite brands of cosmetics, bring a two-year supply or arrange for periodic shipments. Occasionally toilet articles are found in the Commissary, or in the bazaar, but choice is limited and prices are high. Women will want a supply of creams or oils to counteract the extreme dryness of the atmosphere, which affects the skin.

There are two beauty shops, run by European women, in Kabul. By American standards, they are not very efficient enterprises, but the work done is fairly good.

There are two barbers widely used by the American community; one visits the home or office, at the convenience of the patron, and the other is located in the Kabul Hotel.

PART V - TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

a. Transportation

Motor Pool. The Mission operates a motor pool for official business purposes, including free transportation for employees to and from work, and bus service at thirty-minute intervals between the American Embassy and the Mission offices. Mission vehicles are also available, on a limited basis, for non-official use at a charge of ten cents per mile. Children are transported to and from school at the rate of \$4.00 per month per child (reimbursable). Groups of four or more using a vehicle for church or theatre are not charged.

In emergencies, the motor pool provides overland transportation to Peshawar.

Local transportation consists of a few over-crowded, dilapidated buses, and numerous horse-drawn carriages. There are also a few commercial taxis, but the lack of telephone communication makes them rather inaccessible.

Airlines. Ariana Airlines, the Afghan airline, serves all the principal cities of the country and operates regular flights to Delhi, Karachi, Teheran and Beirut. Indian Airlines, Pakistan International Airways, and Iranian Airlines also operate regular, scheduled flights. However, during the winter flight schedules are frequently interrupted by bad weather, and most travelers prefer to drive to Peshawar, where there is a daily flight to Karachi.

Personal Automobile. There are four automobile dealers in Kabul: Ford, Volkswagen, Landrover, and Mercedes-Benz. Parts and service are extremely limited. There are no service stations or repair garages in the American sense, and only a few qualified Afghan mechanics.

For those who wish to bring an American automobile to the post, it is recommended that a good supply of spare parts be brought, including at least two spare tires and an ample supply of tire patches. If the vehicle is not new, it should be completely reconditioned, with all new nylon or equivalent tires installed.

In addition to spare parts, automobile owners should bring anti-freeze, automatic transmission oil, spare windshield wipers, locking gas caps, tire chains, and tools to make minor repairs. Back-up lights are very helpful on dimly lighted streets.

An Afghan driver's license may be obtained by presenting a current U. S. license to the Personnel Office of the Mission; the Afghan automobile license is obtained through the Mission's Transportation Office.

Insurance. Automobile insurance is not required in Afghanistan, but third-party insurance is required for travel to Pakistan, and it is recommended that insurance be obtained. It is available from the Indamer Afghan Industries in Kabul; which provides coverage through the Sterling Insurance Company of India, the New Hampshire Fire Insurance Company at Karachi, and several good British firms. Insurance may also be arranged before leaving the United States by having any agent or broker contact the American International Underwriters Corporation or the American Foreign Insurance Association. Both organizations have branch offices throughout the United States.

b. Mail and Parcel Post

International postal service and State Department pouch facilities are available for mailing letters and packages to USOM personnel in Afghanistan. The latter is the most used and is more reliable. There are no APO facilities.

The correct address for mail being sent by State Department pouch is:

John Doe  
USOM/Kabul  
State Department Mail Room  
Washington 25, D. C.

Via international postal service:

John Doe  
USOM  
American Embassy  
Kabul, Afghanistan

By either method, air mail letters require 25¢ postage per half ounce (air letter forms, obtainable at the Post Office, may be sent for 10¢), and will reach Kabul in approximately a week to ten days.

Parcel Post by either method reaches Kabul in approximately two months, and postage is at the international rate for Afghanistan. For limitations on international Parcel Post consult your local Post Office. Limitations on packages via State Department sea pouch are: Must not exceed 11 lbs. in weight, 18" in length, 42" in length and girth combined; must not be registered or insured; cannot contain tobacco, liquids, fragile items, firearms, ammunition, incendiaries, perishable goods, or poisons.

Prescription medicines (emergency supply) and other prescription items such as glasses may be sent to the post by State Department air pouch. These should be clearly marked on the outside as to contents.

Letter mail from the post may be sent by State Department air pouch, but packages must be sent by international postal facilities.

c. Telephone and Telegraph

There is limited international telephone service in Afghanistan. Service to the United States is reportedly good. Internal service is only fair; maintenance is poor and the system breaks down frequently.

Telegrams arrive from the United States in one to five days; telegrams from Pakistan and India sometimes take up to two weeks for delivery.

d. Shipping and Packing

Because Afghanistan is a land-locked country, with poor transportation facilities, personnel should anticipate a long delay in the arrival of unaccompanied freight, whether air or surface. Weight allowances include 66 lbs. accompanied air baggage for each traveler, 100 lbs. unaccompanied air freight, and 200 lbs. unaccompanied surface freight. Provisions differ somewhat for contract personnel; refer to the several contracts for the amounts of baggage, air freight and surface freight allowed. Unaccompanied air freight takes approximately four weeks to reach Kabul from the United States; in winter additional delays may occur as a result of poor weather or landing conditions. It is therefore recommended that personnel bring with them a supply of clothing sufficient for at least six weeks.

Sea shipments should be packed and crated to withstand extremely rough handling, transporting over very rough roads, tropical heat, monsoons and humidity. The following packing guides are recommended: Crates to be of 3/4" lumber, with 3/4" x 4" wooden battens surrounding each and, in addition to steel strapping. Contents of crates not to exceed 500 lbs. and to be adequately braced and wrapped to avoid damage from jostling and weather. Identify crates by number and show these numbers on shipping documents. Include packing lists in each crate.

Sea shipments are routed to Karachi, then sent by rail to Peshawar, and then trucked to Kabul over 180 miles of mostly unpaved road. Goods may be pilfered from shipments not properly crated and banded, and a high percentage of breakage can be expected if goods are poorly packed. Because of the limited transport facilities, large lift vans should not be shipped to this post. Since markings on crates are meaningless, any items necessarily fastened to the bottom of the packing case should be reinforced to withstand upside-down travel. Shipments should be waterproofed, and heat damage should be considered in food orders. All shipments should be insured.

For all sea shipments, instruct packers and shippers to mark each container, shipping document, and packing list as follows: container number, weight and general description of contents, and the following shipping address:

USOM Afghanistan  
c/o American Embassy  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Via Karachi  
In transit to Afghanistan  
For \_\_\_\_\_

(Full name of employee; not just initials)

Copies of the Bill of Lading should be distributed as follows:

1. Original and one copy via Air Mail to: LIAISON OFFICER
2. One copy via Ship's Mail, on carrying vessel: USOM Afghanistan  
c/o American Embassy  
Karachi, Pakistan
3. One copy via Air Mail to: Traffic Officer  
USOM Afghanistan  
c/o American Embassy  
Kabul, Afghanistan
4. Two copies of Bill of Lading and any other shipping documents and packing lists via Air Mail to: (Name of Employee)  
USOM/Kabul  
State Dept. Mail Room  
Washington 25, D. C.

Official shipments within the weight and time limits allowed by travel orders may be consigned to the U. S. Despatch Agent for forwarding via ocean freight. Shippers should write for definite instructions to:

U. S. Despatch Agent  
45 Broadway  
New York, N. Y.

## PART VI - HEALTH CONDITIONS

### a. Sanitation

There are health controls in Afghanistan, such as reporting communicable diseases, quarantine and pest control measures, but they are not yet fully organized or completely effective. There is no sewage disposal system in Kabul. Outdoor privies which empty into open ditches that run along the streets are the rule in Afghan homes. Most homes occupied by Americans have toilets and cesspools, but there are frequent plumbing problems. Garbage is dumped in the ditches mentioned above, and often is not carried away by the flow of water. This water is also used by shopkeepers for cleaning fruits and vegetables, for bathing, and for housekeeping needs.

There are no sanitary regulations governing the sale of food in markets and tea houses. Fruits, vegetables, and meats are sold in open-air roadside shops where they are exposed to dirt, dust and flies. Commercial refrigeration is almost non-existent.

All water must be boiled 15 to 20 minutes before drinking. Vegetables and fruits must be boiled or soaked in antiseptic solutions. Meats must be checked carefully to be sure they are fresh, and must be thoroughly cooked. Vitamins, and in some cases calcium and iron tablets (or a vitamin-mineral mixture) should be taken regularly by the whole family.



Flies are numerous for eight months of the year and probably are responsible for much of the gastro-intestinal upsets suffered by Americans. Mosquitoes appear to be under control within Kabul city limits; however, in other parts of Afghanistan they are still numerous. Scorpions are prevalent during the summer months and in heated rooms in the winter.

#### b. Disease and Control

The absence of reliable statistics on the number of cases of disease in Kabul makes it difficult to state accurately the most common sicknesses. The diseases endemic in Kabul are typhoid, typhus, smallpox, infectious hepatitis, tuberculosis, amoebic and bacillary dysentery, malaria, and venereal diseases. The most common complaint of Americans is diarrhea, especially during the summer months. The prevalence of disease is high compared to the United States, but appears to be less than in most other Asiatic countries.

Regular immunizations against typhoid, tetanus, typhus, cholera, and smallpox are given at the Dispensary. DPT is given to the children. These immunizations should be up-to-date before leaving the United States. Protection for adults against diphtheria is also recommended for Afghanistan. Yellow fever immunization is requested by Pakistan through which most personnel must pass en route to Kabul. Since this immunization is not available in Afghanistan, it is wise to obtain it before leaving the United States.

The supply of medicine in the local shops appears to be very erratic and cannot be relied upon for emergencies. Most of the items in your home medicine chest should be brought with you. Suggested items include: bandages, bandaids, adhesive tape, antiseptic with merthiolate, aspirin, cotton, burn ointment, talcum powder, thermometer, hot water bottle, Kaomagna or similar preparation, globaline tablets for water purification, and a thermos jug. Families with children should carry the last two items with them en route to Kabul. Any special prescription medicine taken regularly must be brought in adequate supply, and arrangements made for future deliveries from the United States. It is wise to bring a supply of medicine in your accompanying baggage, since the first few weeks in Kabul are the most difficult. Adequate supplies of antibiotics and emergency medication are available at the Dispensary.

#### c. Medical Facilities

In Kabul the Medical Division of the Department of State maintains a Dispensary staffed by a qualified physician and a nurse. The Dispensary is equipped to handle only routine outpatient care, immunizations, such emergencies as accidents, acute infections, the usual childhood diseases, etc. Patients with more serious diseases must be evacuated to adequate facilities as soon as practical and safe. The Dispensary physician will determine the need for medical evacuation.

The Dispensary is not equipped safely to handle delivery of babies, and expectant mothers must arrange to be delivered in New Delhi, Karachi, or Beirut, where adequate facilities exist. Costs of travel and hospitalization are borne by the employee. The Dispensary physician will give every assistance in prenatal and postnatal care, and give any aid possible in case of an emergency, such as prenatal hemorrhage, threatened miscarriage, etc. If the expectant mother elects to have a home delivery, the U. S. Government assumes

no responsibility for complications that may arise, and stipulates that the case be placed in the hands of a local physician-obstetrician who agrees in advance to be the principal professional attendant at the time of delivery.

At present, cases requiring elective surgery or long-range treatment are evacuated from Kabul. Negotiations are under way with the Department of State which, if successful, will lead to a substantial extension and broadening of the Kabul Dispensary facilities. These plans contemplate facilities for inpatient treatment including bed care if required. Laboratory facilities including X-ray, provisions for obstetrical cases and surgery have been recommended, together with an augmented medical staff.

For emergency dental treatment, there is one qualified dentist in Kabul. The teeth of all members of the family should be thoroughly checked before leaving the United States.

There is one qualified ophthalmologist in Kabul; those who wear glasses are advised to bring extra pairs.

## PART VII - CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND FINANCES

### a. Currency Regulations and Exchange

The monetary unit in Afghanistan is the Afghani; one Afghani consists of 100 puls. The market value of the Afghani fluctuates considerably; it has been as high as 59 to the U. S. dollar, and as low as 35; for the past six months it has averaged around 43. Mission personnel are strictly forbidden to purchase local currency in the black market; the Embassy Disbursing Office provides an accommodation check-cashing service.

A checking account with a U. S. bank is a necessity; Commissary and Staff House accounts are payable in dollars, and dollar currency is not available, nor can it be used at this post. Most Mission personnel allot their salary checks to a U. S. bank, and draw checks on that account as needed.

### b. Free Entry Privileges and Restrictions

ICA employees, including contract personnel, are permitted duty-free entry privileges on personal shipments. However, items imported to Afghanistan under this privilege may not be sold to any person who does not himself have free entry privileges, unless the buyer pays the required duty (if any) on the purchases.

### c. Pets

There are no restrictions on the importation of pets. In shipping pets from Afghanistan, a medical certificate and customs clearance are required. Clearance is obtained through the American Embassy. Arrangements can be made in Kabul for air shipment of pets directly from Kabul to New York. The Afghan (tauzi) hound cannot be exported from Afghanistan without special permission from the Foreign Office.

## PART VIII - OTHER POSTS

The following information applies specifically to Kandahar and Lashkar Gah, and will be of interest to those who contemplate being stationed at either of these posts. The section on Kabul should be read carefully, as material which applies to all posts has not been repeated; for instance, the sections on "Household Effects and Equipment to be Brought from U. S.," "Transportation and Communication," "Health Conditions," etc. contain important information for all travelers to Afghanistan.

### a. Kandahar

General Description. The ancient, historical city of Kandahar is situated to the southwest of Kabul some 320 miles; by plane the trip requires an hour and fifty minutes. The second largest city in Afghanistan (population estimated at 70,000) and seat of government for the province of Kandahar, it lies in a singularly beautiful valley, dramatized by jagged remnants of the great mountains to the north.

There is seldom any snow in Kandahar and rainfall is very light. The fertile valley is under extensive cultivation, irrigated by a system of inner canals and jouies (ditches). The weather is beautiful, although temperatures of 120 degrees Fahrenheit are frequent in summer. The atmosphere is brilliantly clear most of the year and is marred only by infrequent dust storms which usually occur in the spring.

Although a city of greater antiquity than Kabul, many aspects of the present-day city give it the appearance of newness. Except in Old Kandahar, there are no dun-colored walls enclosing the homes; instead, low, beautifully constructed stone walls make it possible to see into the compounds, most of them filled with a profusion of flowers.

Housing. A Staff House is maintained for transients and for new arrivals at the post. Personnel assigned to Kandahar are given permanent housing as rapidly as possible.

The government-leased houses, although made of mud bricks, are painted white or pastel colors. Many are handsome, even elegant, with decorations of elaborate stone work and carved wood. Most of those occupied by American personnel have large compounds both front and back, and many newly constructed homes have been built on sites already filled with bearing fruit and nut trees and flowering shrubs.

The interiors are interesting and comfortable. They lend themselves easily to artistic decoration. The deeply recessed arches which form the windows and the domed ceilings are decorative in themselves. The walls are about three feet thick, affording good insulation against heat and cold. The furniture, which is imported from India and Europe, is beautiful and in such quantity that homes are very well furnished. Kerosene cooking stoves and kerosene heaters for hot water are rapidly being replaced by modern, electric appliances. Homes are cooled during the hot summer months by electric desert coolers. During the few cold months they are heated by means of modern-type kerosene heaters and wood stoves.

Electricity is supplied by a central power plant at present, which will be augmented by additional power supplied from water-power turbines, in the near future. Houses are equipped with transformers to reduce current from the 220 volts supplied to 110 volts for normal use. However, the power is rated at 50 cycles, so that adapters are required for record players, tape recorders, etc. unless they are made for 50 cycles. This does not necessarily affect the average vacuum sweeper, refrigerator or deep freeze. It should be noted, however, that automatic washers and dryers will not operate in this area. Usually, the wringer type washing machine will work on 50 cycles. As a precautionary measure, check with your appliance dealer as to your own particular equipment.

Water. In the Staff House area, where many Americans live, the water comes from a deep well and is absolutely safe to use just as it comes from the faucet. In other sections, where shallow wells are in use, the water must not be used without boiling. However, persons who have shallow wells usually get their drinking water from the Staff House supply.

Food. Staple foods have to be brought in from the American Embassy Commissaries in Karachi or Kabul. Orders sent to Karachi on the first of the month usually arrive by the 15th of the following month. Orders can also be placed with export houses in Beirut or Denmark and come through in about three months.

Lamb and goat are plentiful the year around, but beef is scarce in the summer and of poor quality. Chickens, ducks and turkeys are of fair quality and plentiful. Many families buy their fowl and feed and fatten them at home. Eggs are very good and inexpensive.

The world-famous grapes and melons are grown near here and exported in great quantities. During the fall and winter huge, luscious pomegranates are abundant and reasonable. Fresh vegetables are obtainable in season. As they are shipped in from surrounding areas, usually from Pakistan, the quality is often not the best, but usable. Vegetables can be grown in your own compound; it would be wise to bring a variety of seeds along.

Bazaar Shopping. The bazaars are not so numerous as those in Kabul, but Kandahar is famous for a number of products; silver and copper craft work, and exquisite turban material in particular. As a rule, there is a large selection of imported materials: wollens from England; cottons from India, America, Japan, France and Italy; brocades from India and China; and a few synthetics from Japan.

Dishes and glassware can be bought from the "porcelain sellers" as well as locally made cooking utensils and a few things imported from Japan or the United States. However, the selection of dishes and glassware is limited as to design and size. If you wish dessert plates, salad plates, cocktail glasses, and the like, it would be wise to ship your own. The quality of locally obtained chinaware is average.

Servants in this country are male; there are no housemaids. The house-boy cleans, washes and irons, in most cases. The cook does the marketing as well as cooking. A gardener is required to maintain the large compounds. Wages run from \$15.00 to \$25.00 per month each.

## Social Activities and Community Facilities

Recreation, as such, is limited to the social life created by the families themselves. The Kandahar Community Club meets once a month for dancing, fun, and food. At very infrequent periods USIS movies are shown.

Churches. No regular church services of any kind are held in Kandahar. The Reverend Dr. J. Christy Wilson, of Kabul, holds a non-denominational Protestant service on his rare visits to Kandahar, and a priest occasionally comes from Quetta to conduct a Roman Catholic service.

Transportation. Kandahar is on the air route between Karachi and Kabul, and Beirut and Kabul, so that all planes between these points make refueling stops in Kandahar. Ariana Airlines makes two flights weekly to Karachi and Beirut and return. Iranian Airlines also has flights through Kandahar to and from Teheran.

For local transportation, a car can be useful in going to the bazaar or taking side trips to Lashkar Gah or other scenic points. Roads and streets at present are not paved, but plans are being laid for paving some main streets in the foreseeable future. Late model U. S. cars, because of their low center of gravity, are not suitable to the present road conditions.

Mission cars, on a limited basis and if not required for official use, may be rented for private use at 10¢ per mile, which includes gasoline, oil, and driver.

Education. The one school now operating is the Brown Day School, with classes to fit several age groups. The Calvert System is used.

Medical Facilities. There is an outpatient dispensary staffed by a nurse, provided by the State Department. In addition, the Morrison-Knudsen Company has a modern, well-equipped hospital, headed by an American doctor, where American personnel are treated and cared for. It is possible that Morrison-Knudsen will phase out of operation in the spring of 1960; if this should happen, efforts will be made to maintain the hospital under other auspices. Regarding maternity cases, conditions stated in the Kabul Report apply.

Shipping and Packing. See Kabul Report; all conditions therein apply, except for proper addresses, which are as follows:

For surface shipments: USOM/Afghanistan  
Kandahar, Afghanistan  
Via Karachi and Chaman, Pakistan  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Employee's full name)

For Air Freight: USOM/Afghanistan  
Kandahar, Afghanistan  
Via Kandahar Airport, Afghanistan  
For \_\_\_\_\_  
(Employee's full name)

b. Lashkar Gah

General Description. Lashkar Gah is located in south central Afghanistan in the Helmand River Valley at an elevation of about 2,500 feet. This is a desert region and vast arid plains surround the community. The climate is very dry, having an average yearly rainfall of five inches, and nearly all of this occurs during the winter and early spring months. Extreme temperatures range from 18 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit, and because the winters tend to be mild, the weather from September to the middle of May is excellent. The extremely hot, arid season occurs during the remaining months. Although the heat of summer afternoons is intense, a light breeze is always in evidence and with a clear, cloudless sky there is low humidity. Actually, the climate is pleasant and could be considered ideal were it not for the occasional heavy dust storms brought in from the desert by strong summer winds.

Lashkar Gah is little more than four years old. The buildings and homes are modern. As the trees planted on both sides of the gravel-surfaced streets continue to acquire height, the community becomes more and more attractive. Each home has a nice lawn and garden. A small bazaar (shops) is located on the river bank, although shopping for other than a few food items must be done in Kandahar or elsewhere.

This post is somewhat remote. Kandahar, 94 miles away, is the nearest large city. Since ICA has a Staff House in Kandahar, it is possible to plan weekend shopping trips to this city, where bazaars are more numerous and interesting.

Within a few miles of Lashkar Gah are the ruins of Qaleh Bist and Lashkari Bazaar where traces of a rich past can be found, recalling scenes of elaborate pageants and gatherings in the days of the Kushan kings (first to eighth centuries A.D.). Great devastation occurred with Genghis Khan's arrival in the thirteenth century. Many of the ruins visible today are the result of his campaigns.

About 100 miles away is Kajakai Dam, built a few years ago, where there is comfortable housing available at a nominal cost. The fishing is good there and the scenery excellent.

Quetta, Pakistan, 250 miles away, is the place most frequently visited by the families here. Driving time required is about six to eight hours. Quetta is a small city where one can enjoy relaxation, a change of food, and interesting bazaars.

The administrative offices of the Mission are located in the north wing of the ICA Staff House, and the technicians and their Afghan counterparts share office space in Helmand Valley Authority buildings. All offices are centrally located in Lashkar Gah within walking distance of the housing.

The scheduled work week for the Mission is Monday through Thursday, and Saturday from 0800 to 1700, with one hour for lunch. Fridays and Sundays are non-work days, in deference to the Moslem Sabbath which falls on Friday. These hours are subject to variation during the heat of summer.



Sports and Outdoor Activities. Swimming is the most popular sport among residents. The large pool is new and because of the pure water supply is sanitary. The pool offers relief from the summer heat, and swimming can be enjoyed about six months of the year, from the middle of April through September. Bring at least two bathing suits.

Tennis and badminton are also popular sports. Hunting can be enjoyed a short distance from Lashkar Gah. Camera enthusiasts will find many interesting subjects to be photographed in Afghanistan; much of Afghan living is the same as it was two to three thousand years ago.

It would be wise to bring playthings for children, depending upon their ages and tastes. Toys and books should be brought for very young children. There is no playground equipment in Lashkar Gah.

Social Activities. Although there is no commercial entertainment available, there is a good deal of inter-home and Staff House entertaining. Entertaining at home includes teas, cocktail parties, buffet dinners, bridge and poker parties. When there is an occasion for a community party or dance, families combine forces and plan the various contributions to provide refreshments. In summer most entertaining is at the swimming pool where there is an outdoor fireplace for cooking.

There are no restaurants, clubs, operas, concerts or cinema houses. However, there are weekly showings of USIS educational films, and arrangements are now being made for commercial films to be shown.

Housing. All homes of ICA and contract employees are government-leased. Basic furnishing are provided, including a kerosene range, electric refrigerator, heating stoves, draperies, rugs and furniture for an average-sized living room, dining room and bedrooms. Cost of rent, heat and utilities is assumed by the U. S. Government.

Although availability of one or the other depends upon vacancies at the time of arrival, there are two kinds of housing units - a larger detached house and a duplex. The larger house has a laundry room and a servant's room. Laundry rooms are shared in the duplexes. The houses are comfortable and attractive, having been built to conform closely to U. S. standards and requirements. Floors are of cement, and only the kitchens and bathrooms have asphalt-tiled floors. There are no bathtubs, only showers. Laundry rooms are equipped with sanitary tubs. The houses are of one-story construction and do not have basements; this makes storage a problem. Furnishings are of blond wood of Swedish modern styling, and are attractive and functional, well suited to the interiors of the houses.

Because of the limited number of houses available at present, bachelors are required to live in the Staff House, although additional housing is planned for the near future.

Household Effects and Equipment to be Brought from U. S. See Kabul Report.

All drug and toiletry items should be brought to the post and an interim supply should be shipped in air freight, as well as some in accompanying luggage. Since this area is very arid most of the year, many people are adversely affected by the dryness and require more than a normal amount of creams and lotions. These articles are not available on the local bazaars and are only obtainable in limited quantity and selection at the Kabul and Karachi Commissaries.

Surface shipments require at least three to four months, so an interim supply of bedding and kitchenware for immediate use must be brought by air freight. When packing, the season of the year should be taken into consideration: blankets are not needed from May to October; summer clothing is worn from April to October.

Facilities. The water supply is piped from wells and is pure and potable. The sewage system is modern. The 110-220 volt, 60 cycle, AC current is supplied at this time by diesel generators, but hydroelectric power should be available in the near future. Then the current will be 110-220 volts, 50 cycle, AC. During the summer months desert coolers cool the houses and solar heaters provide hot water. During winter months diesel heaters are used to heat the houses and provide hot water. Kerosene is used for cooking. All of these facilities are provided.

There is no dry cleaning service at or near this post, but some families do their own with fluids purchased from the Commissary.

Each family employs a houseboy who can be trained to launder and iron. Clothes suffer a great deal of wear and tear, due to the high salt content of the water and the carelessness of houseboys. Laundry service is free for residents of the ICA Staff House.

Temporary Quarters. Upon arrival at the post, employees and their dependents will be assigned to temporary housing, unless permanent quarters have been selected for them previously. The USOM Staff House is available for temporary housing until suitable permanent quarters are ready. Kits consisting of bed linens, blankets, crockery, cooking utensils and silverware are furnished on a loan basis until air freight is received.

Food. Most staples are ordered from the American Embassy Commissary in Karachi or from private companies in the U. S. and Denmark. The required membership fee in the Karachi Commissary is \$150 for each employee plus \$50 for each dependent. It is suggested that every member of the Mission take full advantage of his food shipment allowance, since prices are much higher at the Commissary than in the U. S., and some items are not available. Also, Commissary shipments are frequently delayed. Slow transportation and lack of equipment preclude the ordering of frozen foods.

Vegetables, fruits, nuts, rice and seasonings, lamb and beef can be purchased locally. However, because of possible contamination all these foods must be especially prepared. Chicken and eggs are plentiful and cheap. The grapes and melons are excellent.

Clothing for Women. Summer clothing is worn at least six months of the year. For daytime wear, fabrics such as cool cottons, denim, and chino are best. Although comfortable for evening, clothing made of synthetic materials tends to be too warm during the day. Evening wear should include smart, informal dresses of cotton, silk, nylon or orlon. Sweaters and stoles are sometimes needed at night.

Winter, although not severe, requires warm clothing. By all means bring any woolens you already have, but it is suggested that washable orlon-wool or other acetate mixtures be brought to avoid the necessity of dry cleaning.

Formal clothing is not worn at this post, but it would be wise to be prepared for formal affairs in Kabul or while on leave.

A winter coat is definitely needed. A winter-weight jacket is practical for daytime wear, and a plastic or other light-weight raincoat is required for the rainy season.

A two-year supply of shoes should be planned. Because of the graveled roads, everyday shoes wear out quickly. A pair of galoshes should be brought for the short rainy season and for winter wear in Kabul.

Hose are not worn during the hot summer months. During the cooler months, however, plan above your normal requirements, as the wear and tear on hose is extremely high.

Bring a full two-year supply of lingerie, including cotton for summer months. Because of its delicate nature, lingerie deteriorates very quickly.

Sports clothing should include at least two bathing suits and one or two bathing caps. Sunglasses are a must. Slacks and pedalpushers can be worn outside the home, but short shorts and halters are worn only at home or within the compound wall around the swimming pool.

Sports activities here are of the warm weather variety, but skiing can be enjoyed in the northern part of the country (see Kabul Report).

Clothing for Men. For work even among the administrative staff, informality is the keynote and a necessity in the Helmand Valley. Khakis are recommended for work. A sun helmet or cotton peaked cap is a requirement for field technicians. Sun helmets can be purchased in Quetta.

For relaxation, bring an ample supply of sport shirts, shorts, and at least two pairs of swim shorts. Sunglasses are a necessity.

Suits are worn only to evening parties and when on business in Kabul. Lightweight cord or chino are the most comfortable materials in summer; in winter, wool or orlon-wool. A tuxedo and white dinner jacket will be worn seldom, if at all; however, as suggested for women, perhaps it would be better to be prepared rather than have to forego a formal affair.

Only a topcoat is needed in southern Afghanistan. Bring a warm jacket and lightweight raincoat. An ample supply of hose and underwear should be brought. Due to frequent laundering, this kind of apparel deteriorates quickly.

Enough shoes should be brought to last two years, the kind depending on one's work. A field technician will need field boots. Rubber boots and rubbers should be brought for the rainy season and for winter wear in Kabul.

Clothing for Children. See Kabul Report. There is no children's clothing in the Lashkar Gah bazaar.

Servants. Servants can be obtained locally at a reasonable wage. It is not difficult to find one who has been trained by Americans. Houseboys' salaries range from \$12 to \$16 a month. The salary of a cook is somewhat higher. Gardeners whose services are sometimes shared by two families are paid \$8 to \$10 a month.

Education. A cooperative school is operated in the community by the American families, utilizing three American teachers. The school uses the Calvert System. Books and materials must be purchased individually from the Calvert School in Baltimore, Maryland. Parents are advised to bring complete sets of books with them to avoid delays. Tuition at present is \$35 per month per pupil, which is used to pay teachers' salaries.

Churches. Non-denominational Protestant services are held every Sunday in the Staff House. Sunday School for young children is held before the church service. The Reverend Dr. J. Christy Wilson, American Protestant minister in Kabul, visits Lashkar Gah from time to time and conducts the service. Taped sermons are recorded and sent to Lashkar Gah by Dr. Wilson.

Beauty Shops do not exist. Regular permanent waving supplies are usually available at the Commissary.

Barbers come from the bazaar to the home or office and are not expensive.

Transportation. Only when traveling away from Lashkar Gah is a vehicle needed. The unofficial use of government-owned vehicles is limited, for most of the vehicles at this post were ordered for and are assigned to projects. The rate for such usage is 10¢ a mile.

Some families have their own automobiles, and these people have more opportunity to see the surrounding country. For comfort, too, one's own car is better. See the Kabul Report for conditions of maintaining an automobile.

Gasoline is rationed in the southern part of the country. The ration for private cars is thirty imperial gallons (37-1/2 U. S. gallons) per month, priced at 20.5 Afghans (approximately 53¢) per imperial gallon.

Mail and Parcel Post. All USOM/A diplomatic mail sent from Washington is first received in Kabul, and then forwarded to Lashkar Gah by diplomatic pouch. Personnel at this post should add from three to ten days to the length of time required for mail to travel from New York to Kabul. Mail regulations contained in the Kabul Report, including addresses, apply to Lashkar Gah. Non-diplomatic local mail facilities are not recommended.

Telephone and Telegraph. There is radio communication between Lashkar Gah, Kandahar, and Kabul for official business and any emergency. Telephone communication does exist between major cities, but maintenance is poor and

at times there is no communication. Telegraph service is too uncertain even to consider its use.

Shipping and Packing. See Kabul Report; all conditions apply. The correct shipping address for surface shipments to Lashkar Gah is:

USOM/A  
Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan  
Via Karachi and Chaman  
In transit to Afghanistan  
For \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name of employee)

For air freight shipments:

USOM/A  
Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan  
Via Kandahar Airport  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name of employee)

Health Conditions. See Kabul Report.

There are many insects present during the summer months, but they can be kept under control with insecticide aerosols. An effective malarial control campaign is carried on by the Public Health and Sanitation Department of the Helmand Valley Authority. To discourage insects, it is possible to have one's home sprayed annually with the same mixture of DDT and talc used by the Public Health and Sanitation Department in their malarial control.

Medicine cannot be purchased locally. Adequate supplies of antibiotics and emergency medication are available in the clinic.

The clinic is presided over by an American doctor, but is not equipped to handle more than minor surgery. In an emergency, the facilities of the Morrison-Kundsen Hospital in Kandahar are available. Should these facilities not be adequate, arrangements are made to evacuate the patient to an American-type hospital in Karachi, or an American hospital in Dhahran, Frankfurt, or the U. S., depending upon the patient's illness.

Married women of childbearing age must arrange for delivery outside of Afghanistan, as local health units are not equipped for complications that might arise in maternity cases.

Miscellaneous. It is necessary that all personnel establish a state-side banking account for deposit of salary checks and for cashing personal checks. Personal checks only are used in negotiations for Commissary supplies.

Calling cards and business cards are not used in Lashkar Gah. All invitations are informal. Communication between homes is by hand-carried note. It is suggested that a supply of inexpensive note paper, plain small cards and envelopes be brought.