Afghanistan’s Transboundary Waters

By: Laura Schroeder and Derek Bradley

Despite being a landlocked country with an arid climate Afghanistan possesses a surprising number of fresh water surface sources thanks to snowpack originating in its mountainous terrain. While the country has several freshwater sources contained within it (namely the Northern water basin) all four of the country’s largest river basins are transboundary rivers.

Despite repeated attempts by Afghanistan’s neighbors and Western nations active in rebuilding the country, the government of Afghanistan has been hesitant to enter into any international watercourse agreements. In fact only one of the rivers has a treaty associated with it, the Helmand River. The Helmand treaty between Afghanistan and Iran was negotiated after many years and was finally signed in the early 1970s with the treaty going in to force in 1977. Since the signing of this treaty both countries have experienced major shifts in their governments. As a result of these government shifts, many provisions of the 1970s treaty have been ignored by both nations throughout the treaty’s history.

In addition to the Helmand River basin, there are also the Kabul, Hari-Rud, and Amu Darya basins. The riparian countries of the Kabul river basin include Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and China. Afghanistan signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1921 dealing with usage of the river for irrigation and residential use on both sides of the Kabul river. The Kabul treaty, however, dates back to Great Britain’s occupation of land that is now Pakistan. The treaty has not been updated and neither country relies upon it.

The Hari-Rud river basin is shared between Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. Leaving out Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Iran negotiated an agreement concerning the Hari-Rud. In 2004, Turkmenistan and Iran completed a dam that provides irrigation and drinking water for Iran’s second largest city Mashhad. Afghanistan intends to build its own dam upstream of the 2004 dam which has the potential to cut off more than 70% of the water Iran receives from the Hari-Rud.

The Amu Darya acts as the border for significant areas between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. While there are some treaties between Afghanistan and its neighbors concerning borders, cooperation issues, and joint management of the Amu Darya there are no treaties concerning allocation and usage of water. Further complicating the benefit of any of these treaties is that they were made between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Since the departure of the Soviet Union, no new agreements have been made between the new democratic government of Afghanistan and those of the Central Asian Republics.

While Afghanistan has access to a significant amount of water it has not been able to fully utilize much of it due to a lack of infrastructure. USAID and many other organizations have been
interested in assisting Afghanistan build this infrastructure but Western Donor Countries have been hesitant to provide resources for major water infrastructure projects because of the lack of necessary international water allocation agreements. Decision makers have been distrustful of their neighbors and have generally not been cooperative when it comes to providing information to other countries about how various water projects would influence transboundary waters. Despite little progress since the establishment of a democratically elected government in Afghanistan there has been some advances in putting Afghanistan in a player’s position with regard to international watercourse treaties. The World Bank, beginning in 2006, has facilitated negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. These efforts culminated in the finance ministers of both countries signing an agreement in August 2013 to build a large scale hydropower dam on the Kunar River (part of the Kabul River Basin). While a positive first step, moving forward to the next step will require internal resolution within the Afghani government. Furthermore, the World Bank has recently approved funding for Pakistani hydropower projects despite Afghanistan objecting to one of them. This has led some Afghani decision makers to view the World Bank as skeptically as Pakistan. However, the recently elected Afghan government of President Ghani in May of 2015 publicly stated that they are committed to the Kunar dam and that they are interested in pursuing closer ties with Pakistan. This comes on the heels of China announcing earlier this year that they would help pay for the dam, revitalizing hope that the Pakistan and Afghanistan will work more closely together in the coming years concerning transboundary waters. On the Western side of Afghanistan things are faring worse than to the East. Afghanistan’s only international water use treaty with Iran regarding the Helmand has done little to establish positive relationships between Iran and Afghanistan. Adding to this tension, is development of the Hari-Rud dams as well as further dam construction on the Helmand. Since the “removal” of the Taliban, Afghanistan and Iran have been in talks to resolve the disputes concerning both of these rivers, but no real progress has been made. Both countries insist they are hard at work concerning these negotiations and are putting in a good faith effort; but it would appear that with both nations trying to unilaterally make use of the Hari-Rud tensions might actually be increasing between the two. As pressure on water resources continues to grow in Central Asia and as more infrastructure is built within Afghanistan to capture and utilize the water within its major river basins, international disputes will also continue to become more frequent and heated. International agencies and Western nations should continue to pressure Afghanistan to enter in to transboundary water agreements, but more than anything it appears it will require local decision makers to adjust positions for any progress to be made.

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**Home to Portland**

The plane landed on time Saturday in Portland. Nevertheless, I definitely experienced “bobble head” on the almost 6 hour flight from DC to Portland! Whew!

Spring arrived while I was in Afghanistan, but it is unseasonably dry here. The Willamette River in front of our house is lower than usual. This eastern Oregon girl, won’t complain though about the lack of rain…. Sun shining both Sunday and today…Flowers blooming everywhere!

Catching up a bit and wondering about my next adventure? Scott and I will attend the World
Irrigation Forum in Turkey in the fall as my abstract was accepted. Maybe more work in the Middle East?

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**Door to Door: 41 Hours and Lots of Security!**

Left the EQUALS Compound for the Kabul Airport at 3 pm Friday (approx 3 am Friday in Portland, Oregon) with the EQUALS security contractor PILGRIMS including our driver, armed security, and unarmed Afghan airport liaison. When I was getting in the vehicle at the Compound, I was instructed to stay in the vehicle unless directed to leave it. I was also given special instructions should our vehicle be attacked: “Lay on the floor in the back seat!” I was also told that if the driver and armed security were both injured, that I should push the red panic button attached to the GPS tracking for 5 seconds and the security back at the Compound would come to our rescue. I must say that arriving and departing from the airport was the “scariest” part of the whole trip! There was dead silence in the vehicle both on pick up and today on delivery to the airport. At the Kabul Airport outside perimeter, our EQUALS-PILGRIM security let me out of the vehicle where I was directed to a small building marked “Woman’s Security” in English with Arabic underneath. There was a wool blanket hung over both the entry and exit. No windows. Inside, a woman had me spread eagle and patted me down through my clothes.

I think the armed security had to give up his gun because when I arrived, I noted that the security person retrieved his gun from the outer perimeter check point. I think all the guys had to go through a pat down as well. But, since I was concentrating on behaving “unsuspiciously,” I didn’t really worry about the guys.

Next, I walked from the perimenter to the institutional area of the Kabul Airport where I was once again directed to a blanketed building market with a Women’s Security sign, entered alone and patted down by a female Afghan. Upon exiting this Women’s Security, I was directed to pull my luggage out the vehicle and place it in the scanner. I was then directed to open my suitcase and unload it so that the Airport Security could look for the metal they saw in the scanner. I passed this intermediate inspection, and then the security team loaded me up in our armored rig where we entered the Kabul Airport parking lot. The security person paid some money to park the car, and I unloaded everything again.

This time, the EQUALS-PILGRIM Afghan airport liaison, assisted me out of the parking lot on foot to approach the terminal. At the edge of the parking lot, I was instructed to show my boarding pass. However, I didn’t have one. Moment of panic!

My liaison told me that the only reason I was able to get through the “Bording Pass Checkpoint” was because of his relationship to the checkpoint people. Crazy, since Safi, the airline I was flying doesn’t issue boarding passes electronically—so, the fact was that people were just showing their itinerary. My problem was that I had changed my Safi flight from the morning to the evening and had not known that I should have printed out my itinerary at the Compound.

Passing through the Parking Lot checkpoint, we traversed empty road space to the terminal. Upon entering the terminal, I was once again directed to the women’s “blanket room” and patted down again. Through that, my luggage was scanned and opened again for inspection. The Airport Security does not dig through your luggage, I think afraid that they might grab a bomb, so I
unloaded it and satisfied, I threw everything back into the suitcase.
Finally I ended up at the Safi check-in. My luggage tagged, and boarding passes obtained, I went upstairs alone—my Afghan liasion departed to the arrival lounge to pick up someone else. I lined up and went through immigration and another security scanning which was similar to TSA scannings—no more pat downs there.

Waited a couple of hours, then on the plane to Dubai. It was about a 3 hour flight. At Dubai, we had to go through another TSA security type check to enter the airport.

At Dubai, I waited about 4 hours, then the United Airline departure area opened where passports were checked, and another secondary hand screening of our carry on luggage! Loaded and then a 14 hour flight to DC where I am now waiting (most of the day) for a direct flight to Portland, Oregon.

In DC after immigration, picking up our luggage, and going through customs, we deposited our luggage for scanning and then had another TSA security screening before entering the DC airport proper.

Perhaps the day will come when we can “Beam Over?”

Had a Starbucks Grande Triple Shot Non-fat Latte...but think I might need another one soon! I think this is the longest continuous air trip I ever made in my life. Needless to say, I will appreciate being home again following this amazing adventure!
Technical Secretariat

I presented the recommendations of the Governance training participants to the Technical Secretariat today in Kabul. Afghan’s Technical Secretariat for the Water Sector is made of the following representatives:

- MEW-Ministry of Energy & Water
- MAIL-Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock
- MRRD-Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development
- NEPA-National Environmental Protection Agency
- MUDA-Ministry of Urban Development Affairs
- AWSSC-Afghanistan Water Supply & Sewerage Corporation
- MoHe-Ministry of Higher Education
- MoPH-Ministry of Public Health
- MoE-Ministry of Education
- MoFA-Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- MoM-Ministry of Mines
- KM-Kabul Mayor
The Governance Training Graduates below (with me as their facilitator/ trainer/ teacher) hope that their three pages of single spaced recommendations, following four and a half days of work, will have voice with the Technical Secretariat that has the power to pass regulations and suggest legal amendments to the Water Law to Afghan’s Parliament.

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**Winding Down**

Tomorrow will be my last day of the Governance training here in Kabul with class ending about 11 am. I will provide about a half hour of feed back to the Technical Secretariat at 2 pm. The Technical Secretariat consists of all the in-line water ministries so will give me a chance to interact with some of the more important leaders of the Afghan water sector.

In a short couple of weeks, I made some great friends who shared the ups and downs of the tough side of development work and capacity building. Uniquely, here, you live, eat and play with the people you work with so its a 24/7 relationship that requires that you really learn to trust one another for the simple things, like learning how to get in and out of a security vehicle, or walking down the street. The Basics.

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**March 21- Persian New Year**

After work today, I headed with Glen to Spinney’s, which is the super market adjacent to the Compound, to purchase an Arabic calendar. We are not required to take a security guard with us, but they are posted all along the route and radio each other to follow us on the short walk.

The Persian New Year starts this Thursday (spring equinox) and is an official holiday in Afghanistan. I thought this article on the New Year was especially enlightening:

http://www.tolonews.com/en/opinion/2190-qnawruz-1390-q-or-the-afghan-new-year-Taqi, the translator that I have been working with, will take New Year’s holiday on Wednesday so I will not have a translator that day–though the plan is to train only a half day–and spend the
afternoon with the Technical Secretariat, the highest level of agency organization including the main line water ministries and agencies.

I asked Taqui how New Year’s is usually celebrated before I read the article. He said, “Everyone goes for a picnic!” It’s still pretty dry, dusty and wintery here in Kabul, but likely there are green spots at lower elevations.

I will have to consider how to celebrate! Likely, it won’t be a picnic unless it’s in the Compound.
In preparing to deliver training in Afghanistan, one of my concerns was being a Lutheran-Christian woman teaching Moslem men. I wondered if I would suffer any prejudice? Or, if the men would direct their questions to the translator, instead of me?

I am pleased to report that every man both in and out of class has treated me with the utmost respect. In fact, the teaching experience is extremely rewarding. My only disappointment is that only one woman attended my Public Administration class, and today the woman that had attended
yesterday’s Governance class, did not attend today. According to Moselm custom, men and women do not touch each other. Instead, women, when greeted, put their hand over their chest with a slight bow. I’ve noticed that some men will offer their hand in greeting, especially after a day or two of class. I am taking that as a sign of respect and some acknowledgement of equality, whether or not it is meant in that way. Glen told me that given two men from the Public Administration Class requested to continue with the Governance class attending every day, he knows that the trainings are being well received. Perhaps, because I spent some time studying the proper way to dress in order to honor the culture here, and purchasing the appropriate clothing online, respect was returned to me. Many of the men here at the compound commented favorably on my respectful dress. To tell you the truth, it’s kind of

fun dressing up everyday Afghan style

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**Brunch Out & Shopping at Ganjina**

On Friday (Holy Day), Elizabeth arranged for Paul, Galeb, Arzi, and I to go out to brunch and shopping at a local women’s artisan market in Kabul. As usual, the entrance to security approved locations required a wanding, walk through a metal detector and a hand search through my purse. Apparently, sometimes you are required to show your ID/passport, particularly where alcohol is served since special licenses limit the Afghans from serving alcohol to anyone who is Afghani.
At the artisan market, called Ganjina, the work is prepared by widows and is marked for non-negotiable pricing, which, of course, one is happy to pay. The shop is behind walls and security, and unless you knew where you were going, you would never know how to find this special place. The shopping experience is much less pressured than that on Chicken Street, and the prices reflect that consideration. However, since Holy Day is also the guys day to play basketball here at the compound, Elizabeth and I had to rush through the shopping. Nevertheless I managed to find some lovely textiles, jewelry and Afghan sling shot for my grandson!

The best thing about the excursion was visiting a new part of town. Elizabeth told me that some of the streets that looked particularly nice were rehabilitated by the Japanese development team. Though as you can tell from a couple of pictures, the money didn’t always extend to full length of the street, given the mud that we experienced!
Transportation in Kabul

The streets were filled with hand carts today. I wonder if the carts are manned by a certain ethnic group as most look more Asian than other peoples on the street.
A step up from the hand carts are the donkey carts hauling bigger loads.

Next up are bicycles and motor cycles. In Afghanistan, a rug is used to cover the seat! And a scarf is used instead of a helmet.
Dealing with traffic at the 4 pm rush hour requires an expert driver. Luckily, our driver is young, patient and experienced in nudging the SUV into lanes and streets against all odds...even in the rain! Perhaps a remnant from the British era, Kabul even has stands in the middle of the street for the traffic cop.

Weddings in Afghanistan

On our daily “site seeing” trip in the armoured SUV with the driver and Omar our armed body/security guard, I noticed a big blue building signed as an Afghan-Dubai Wedding Center.” Omar told me that Afghan weddings include over 1,000 guests! The party is traditionally paid for by both sets of parents, but because his father is only a poorly paid Physics teacher that he will pay for his own wedding. Traditionally, the wedding couple receive their gifts a week or so after the wedding with money, gold, jewelry, or household items being the order of traditional gifts. Unfortunately, I didn’t get a picture of the “Wedding Center.” Since weddings are a civil matter, the Mosque is not involved. Typically the marriage license/certificate is obtained at the City Hall. See below some of the mosques that we see on our typical drive back to the Compound.
First Day at the Water Ministry

Glen & I were escorted at 7:15 am through Kabul traffic to the Afghan Water Ministry’s Offices where we arrived a bit before 8 am. After introductions to the local staff, we met with a basin director and later the Deputy Minister of Water to discuss our planned trainings that will begin on Monday.

Between our meeting, Glen told the staff that everything was “clear.” I looked at him curiously, he reported “there was an incident near here at the Ministry of Defense about 9 am.” I learned later from our driver on the way home that a suicide bomber on a bike caused the death of about 30 people. Apparently, we were on “lock down,” at the Ministry, meaning no one was allowed to move until we received the “all clear” sign. Glen said that the lock down was about 4.5 hours. Interesting, the whole event happened without the least disturbance. I understand why Glen (the guy goofing around with the orange on his head) has a lot of trust in our security team. It is deserved. Many, if not most of the ministries or sections have their own kitchens and cooks. The cooking staff for the water team made a fabulous lamb dish today with Persian rice along with a delicious soup and homemade Afghan bread. It’s about dinner time here at the compound—and even though our food is very good, I can’t imagine that it will top lunch!

I took pictures on the way home. As Glen pointed out, this is the only sight seeing we are allowed. This picture shows the vegetable carts in front of the small, stall style shops along the road. Gives “strip mall” a whole new meaning!

The most fascinating view on the way to and from work was the Kabul city ancient, historical wall to the south of Kabul at the tail end of the Kohi Sher Darwaza Mountain. This structure is believed to
have been built in the 5th century. The wall of Kabul is made of mud, and is a staggering 20 feet high and 12 feet thick. It creates a natural fortress which follows the mountain ridge in a sweeping curve down to the river. Unis, the Deputy Chief, said that as a child he used to walk along the wall over the mountain. At lunch, he also shared his story of living and growing up in Afghanistan during his early years, and the suffering that his family endured. Out of the 11 brothers and sisters, only he and 5 others have survived. His mother is still living and in her late 70’s so I have to imagine that Unis isn’t much younger than me. His continued commitment to Afghanistan’s development is amazing.

Another interesting site is the homes that are built into the mountains that we could view along the route. I imagine them as a desert version of the housing Scott and I saw in the Greek Islands. Imagine if they were painted?

We also drove through the old city along the Kabul River. In this stretch the water is channeled through beautiful stoneworked walls. The city was bustling as we returned home about 4 pm today.

Holy Day
Friday is Holy Day in Kabul, Afghanistan so the cooking and cleaning staff at the compound have the day off. We’ll have a brunch at 10 am this morning, but cold meats and cheese later according to the expats living here with me. The dining room is adjacent to my living quarters (bedroom with corner, window office and bath) so while I put up with a little extra noise, I have the boiling water (tea being the drink of choice), frig stocked with bottled water and sodas, and snacks including cold cereals, bread and peanut butter a door away. Luckily, COSTCO had Starbucks VIA on sale, and I stocked up, coffee being my personal drink of choice!

The jet lag (12.5 hours ahead) has subsided a bit. Up at 5:30 am today instead of the usual 3 am. Imagine it had something to do with being up late last night with Glen and Azad completing a two hour briefing! Glen said I looked like I was fading at 9 pm though we went until almost 9:45 pm.

At 10:30 am this morning, Glen arranged for a security transport so that we might enjoy a trip to “Chicken Street.” This shopping location is secure and a place to “haggle” for such things as carpets, azurite, and leather goods. We’ll be out for about an hour and a half. Should be interesting! I will take my camera though I don’t know if I will be allowed to take pictures?

It’s cloudy here today, the ground damp so it looks like there was a little rain last night. Snow
flurries are predicted for the weekend. Sun is shining now.

Yesterday I accomplished work on my training materials by starting the Power Points for the Public Administration workshop. We are still in a state of flux as to when the classes with occur given we are still trying to build attendance. Azad made a call to a Minister last night to rally a few more people. I think we’ll start the Governance training on Monday so I need to spend the majority of my day on those materials and through the weekend. This topic is much more interesting to me personally.

I am learning a lot just by sharing meals with the group of ex-pats living here on the EQUALS compound. So many of these ex-pats are here with real commitment to the people of Afghanistan with many making a real difference in individual lives. The Afghan locals working here have taken their wages to send their children to school, buy homes, and change their futures for the better. As it is here, my experience is that development happens best one relationship at a time.

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**Arrived in Kabul**

Safi Airlines required me to arrive at the Dubai airport 3 hours before my flight today leaving at noon-time to do additional reading in preparation for my governance and public administration facilitation! The flight from Dubai to Kabul was a little over 2 hours and now I’m another half hour time zone distant from Portland, Oregon—a total of 12 1/2 hours now ahead of Scott and Schroeder Law Offices Portland team.

There was a moment of hesitation as I boarded the plane today, thinking about what I was exactly preparing myself to do: Fly to Kabul, Afghanistan! Luckily, I didn’t miss a step. Unexpectedly, the flight was closer to the ground than I expected so I saw the desert landscape along the way. As we approached Kabul for landing, the snow covered mountains surrounding Kabul were amazingly picturesque. The “drop” into Kabul not as dramatic as expected.

“Pilgrims” security team met me at the airport. Inside Ahmad Shah greeted me just past passport inspection. The Kabul airport does not look that much different that Moscow’s airport looked in 1995 or so when I was there: dark with a lot of metal and marble floors! Ahmad Shaw helped me complete my registration card, and move the rest of the way through the arrival process inside the airport.
Once we left the airport, the sun was shining—a very pleasant day here, weather wise. Crisp air—a few piles of snow in dark corners. Wondered why I bothered bringing my Armenian down winter coat?

Walking me quickly across the parking lot, Ahmad Shah, delivered and quickly loaded me into the armored Humvee where Steven took over. Steven showed me the emergency procedures—including the panic button that was between he and the driver in the front seat. I sat behind him, a real body guard! Leaving the airport gates in the Humvee, Steven jumped out to retrieve his pistol which he was required to leave with the airport guards on entering. It took us about 20 minutes to arrive at the EQUALS compound where the security team gave me a tour and further briefing. They have procedures fine tuned for any kind of emergency including fire and earthquake. In security ops, there is a wall of screens monitoring the entire perimeter of the compound with 3 or more men watching the screens.

Following the security briefing, I met my long time family friend and expert hydrologist, Azad Mohammadi, who gave me a status of class preparations, dates, and other relevant details. He took me to dinner at the “mess hall” where shrimp, lasagna, and another dish with assorted vegetable sides were laid out. Nice to have meals together and meet all the people here working in the IRD project. They have already invited me to play basketball, use the workout rooms (they have two), go bowling (yes in Kabul) and visit some shops—either with a body guard or with their approval, of course!

Glen Hearns, my supervisor on this mission, ate dinner with Azad and I advising us of the likely class size and potential learning structures. After dinner, Glenn and I talked longer about my work. Looks like the class with start Sunday or Monday with combined governance and public administration topics.

My apartment comes directly off the mess hall and common lounge area. It is very, very similar to the apartment I used at PA Consulting in Armenia. In fact, Kabul reminds me of Armenia with the marginal streets (paved on the main and unpaved every where else), garbage piled up in corners, half empty cement apartment buildings, open air shops sitting along the highway, and unfortunately the sad fact of war and poverty, people begging in and along the streets.

What wasn”t the same as Armenia, was all the security both up and down the street and at/in out compound. It sounds like tomorrow may involve a visit to the Ministry of Energy and Water which is where are official office site is located!

Transfer at Dubai

Arrived in Dubai after a four hour flight from Portland to DC, a short layover, and a thirteen hour flight. Warm here at 83 degrees until the sun went down shortly after I arrived at my hotel.

The long lines as passport control (visa on the spot) gave me a view of a very mixed middle eastern culture with every kind of head dress and clothing. The majority of the women did not have their heads covered as a suspected that they would. Many more men wearing full length robes (I need to learn the correct name for this attire) and white head coverings with braided black crown piece—perhaps that’s what the government people in Dubai wear? Will learn more tomorrow.

On the landing approach, one views many mansions, obvious in the desert climate, with a swimming
pool, lawns, palms, and impressive entrances. With advice from my Afghanistan security contact, Daryl made me reservations at the The Le Meridien, which as part of its club membership, sent a luxury car for my pick up at the airport, provided me fruit, sparkling water and ice in the room, and a happy hour (though I am not drinking alcohol during Lent). Tomorrow, I will enjoy breakfast with my club membership, continue reading and preparing for the workshops on governance and public administration, enjoy one of the four pools, some sun, and take a short tour of Dubai (which I need to arrange).

While I slept pretty well on the ride from DC to Dubai, a shower and a horizontal sleep seems very inviting now!

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### 48 hours Before Deployment to Afghanistan

Preparing for deployment for a USAID consulting mission to Afghanistan provides a few additional challenges than the usual international work. These included security briefings, determining and purchasing culturally appropriate clothing, and considerations of appropriate teaching methods. The US State Department/USAID contractor that I am working for is IRD: http://www.ird.org/ My introduction to IRD came through Azad Mohammadi, my former expert witness for river modeling, and former City of Portland Water Bureau engineer. Consultant to the firm, William F Schroeder, introduced me to Azad while we prepared for hearings in the Klamath Adjudication. Azad is now IRD’s Regional Director for the Mid-East. To find out about some of the work that IRD is doing in Afghanistan check out http://www.ird.org/our-work/success-stories/recovering-from-loss-caused-by-conflict

John, IRD’s security chief stationed in Afghanistan, was extremely helpful to ease my concerns and perhaps some of the concerns of my family? I found the advice pretty consistent with international travel in general. A new helpful tip was a link to http://eurotalk.com/en/store/learn/dari/talknowdl/dl which I will download in order to follow the security rule to memorize important local phrases in Dari!

As to “what to wear,” I met early on with women who were roommates with, friends of, or married into the conservative side of the Moslem faith and culture. I was also advised by men dealing with security and completing long term assignments in Afghanistan. Interestingly, the women and men had different advice. While the men said, “Just cover your head,” the women told me that I may be in danger of arrest for indecency if all my hair, skin from neck to wrist, and skin from neck to ankles was not covered! What to do?

Trusting the women on this and knowing that it will be easier to wear less than more, I searched the internet to complete some online shopping for culturally appropriate clothes. Confusion reigned! The clothing names, sizes, and how to wear the various items were all unfamiliar. Finally, I just “went for it” at” http://www.eastessence.com/ Later, I found out that I might have shopped in Portland, Oregon at http://www.al-ikhlas.com Maybe there is still time!

As to facilitation methods, I am expecting it will be a challenge. Not knowing the culture or my class make-up, I am still struggling with the workshop outlines in governance and public administration. I have about a week to go before the actual workshops begin! As my office manager, Ms. Daryl Cole advises frequently, “There is still time to panic!” My Afghanistan IRD contact, Glen Hearns, the
trans boundary water specialist has been working with me on SKYPE for the past month to assist me. After arrival in Kabul, I expect that we will have intense work ahead of us. Stay tuned!