

KABUL -GR -C4R

From: KABUL -GR -C4R
Sent: July 4, 2007 9:42 AM
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Subject: KBGR0299 -- NDS facility in Kabul: Proposal for a Canadian renovation project

CONFIDENTIAL -CEO

During an earlier meeting with NDS Director General Saleh, and again during a recent tour of the NDS Sederat detention facility in Kabul, we were asked whether Canada would be interested in modernizing, rebuilding and expanding the prison. NDS officials, including Saleh, readily acknowledge that the facility is old, overcrowded and below standard, e.g. lacking any heating for winter, and with inadequate shower and exercise space. We believe that it probably dates to the 1970s and is based on Soviet or pre-Soviet standards.

2. During our tour, Saleh's [REDACTED] showed us some unused land at the back of the existing facility, which he said could be used for an expansion project. [REDACTED] also offered to share plans of the site.
3. During our interviews with prisoners, none complained of abuse at this facility. However, they all spoke of poor living conditions, which they compared unfavourably to Pol-i-Charkhi.
4. We would support such an investment as part of the package of international capacity-building being offered to NDS. Renovating/ expanding the facility would strengthen our relationship with this key Afghan partner, demonstrating that Canada is prepared to back up its concern about prisoner wellbeing with tangible, bricks-and-mortar improvements.
5. We do not know how much such a facility would cost – possibly two or three million dollars (this is a purely speculative figure).
6. Although an unorthodox project, we do not see any significant communications risks. Canada has already contributed funds to prison renovation as part of the UNODC wing for high-value drugs offenders at Pol-i-Charkhi. Reasonable journalists should understand that improving conditions for Afghan detainees in Kabul (not just those detained by Canada) is a worthwhile humanitarian endeavour, as well as evidence of Canada's seriousness to mitigating detainee issues and helping the NDS to reform.

Consulted: Naidoo
Drafted/ released: Colvin

Document Number / Numéro du document: D-110-038

Receipt Date / Date reçue: 16-11-09

Redacted by AG

Receipt Date: 16-11-09