

Afghanistan March 08

Thursday March 6.

Just a short note to let you know we are doing well in transit to Afghanistan after our flight to Houston and the next day a 15 hour flight to Dubai. Susan and I just finished a nice dinner at our hotel in Dubai. We spent yesterday with Russ and Nancy Cook in Houston—long time friends from Stanford Law School. Unfortunately, over the last thirty five years Russ has turned into mad dog plaintiff's attorney but still has some residual redeeming qualities. Allah will eventually forgive him. Early tomorrow we fly to Kabul where we will meet up with Fary and go by land to Jalalabad. Susan can hardly wait!!

Susan, speaking (typing): Thank you, Cooks, for a delightful stay in Houston. Ya'all would be envious of the gorgeous azaleas in bloom this spring in that lovely city! The flight was more than tolerable, especially with the promise from Steve of a wonderful meal at the hotel in Dubai. Of course, he picks the beef restaurant. I was surprised that they did not ask him if he wanted "the usual". My first notice that we were not in "Kansas" anymore was that as soon as the passport control doors opened, there were five women sitting together on a bench all dressed head to complete toe in black with only slits of their eyes showing. It, to me, was expected, but still a bit of a shock! And the second notice.....in our lovely hotel room on the night stand is a sticker that shows an arrow pointing the way to Holy Mecca, so that guests may correctly pray. It is very late (I think) and an early morning tomorrow to Kabul. So far, so good, so very good!

March 8 Jalalabad

Yesterday we got up early and went to the old terminal at Dubai to catch the KAM air flight to Kabul. No problems. They fly Boeing737 planes. Zero leg room. I had to check one of my bags so the attempt to go with just carry-on luggage did not work. You are only allowed one carry-on up to 10 kilos—22pounds. Both my carry-ons weighed 20 kilos each. So I needed to use some slight of hand even to keep my one carry-on with me that has my computer, the computer we are taking to Ishaq and some other stuff I did not want to check.

Smooth ride to Kabul. The Kabul baggage area was the usual zoo with hundreds of bundles of stuff people check from three or four flights arriving at once. The handlers were pulling this stuff off of the baggage belt and stacking the stuff in the middle of the small area where we were to collect the luggage. The room almost filled with stuff stacked so high there wasn't much room left for people. My bag finally showed up.

We met Fary and the driver outside the airport—you have to go a couple of blocks to get to where the greeters are allowed to wait. We left for Jalalabad around 11:30 and got to the guesthouse around 2:30. The guest house looks great. Fary has done a remarkable job

getting it set up. When we left before it had furniture but nothing else. Now it has the stuff you need like bedding, dishes accessories, etc. Most importantly, she found two cases of Heineken in Kabul for \$40 a case—half price compared to Jalalabad.

Much work has been done on the landscaping of the guest house. A gravel driveway has been installed with much concrete work and brick work around the entire inside perimeter of the wall surrounding the guest house. I will try to send some pictures separately for Abby to post.

Qaher is our driver and Fary has been teaching him to be the cook. The two of them prepared a very nice (but unfortunately only vegetarian) meal.

After our meal we went to the U. S. military base known as the Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT). There we met Shawn Waldroups who is a US Dept. of STATE representative imbedded with the military. We had meet Shawn on our previous trip and had stayed in contact with him. The PRT personnel are in a state of transition so we met some of the folks we dealt with in the past and also some of the new team. About 10 personnel joined the meeting. Shawn will remain here for about another six months. The constant changing of personnel is difficult for the relationship building for everyone including the PRT. Much of the PRT mission is to help on the reconstruction sites using their civil affairs division made up of reservists.

We mentioned to Shawn that we were taking him upon his previous offer of using his APO military mailing address to “send some things for the university.” We advised that 20 boxes of ESL (English as a Second Language) books are now in transit resulting from volunteer efforts of Afghan Rotary Scholar Mohib Israr studying at Central Michigan University. Shawn only partially fell off his chair hearing this. He said it will be interesting to see how “the system” deals with this. We mentioned we are interest for another reason since we want to use the same system to send 50 laptops, 50 additional batteries and three multiple battery charging pools are for the International Learning Center (ILC) at Nangarhar University (NU). He was able to stay balanced on his chair as we explained what we were up to and advised let’s see what happens with the books and if that works let’s give it a go.

We also talked a little about the solar ovens experiment we hope to put together. We will meet with the micro-enterprise folks at DAI and see if they can arrange for a project where the ladies make solar ovens for sale. Also, we want to explore the possibility of having ladies use an industrial type of solar oven in the villages to cook food for sale. Not sure if there is a fit for the PRT regarding this. We will see.

We then talked about the garbage collection process to determine where things stood after our last visit and conversation on the topic. The PRT has applied for a grant for about \$1,800,000 through the US government to build a landfill and purchase vehicles and equipment necessary (bins etc.) to set up a collection system. What they don’t yet have is a plan to get the community involved. We believe we can put this together through the Sister Cities program over here. We will follow up with the Afghan International

Chamber of Commerce (IACC) Jalalabad Office head Dr. Muklois (sp?) regarding this. No one seems to know what happened to Jon Bormet who has promoted this program through his organization International City Managers Association (ICMA). He had met with the PRT regarding this and Fary and I had met with ICMA reps in Washington D.C. a while back.

We then talked about experimenting with bio-fuels as a potential replacement crop for poppies. It turns out that a new program has been introduced to the Jalalabad PRT where a group of agriculture specialists are now part of the rotation and will be rotating in for the next five years. Essentially these are reservists plucked from the fields in Missouri who have just landed in Jalalabad. We were joined by Dr. (Ph.D) Larry Godsey, an ag researcher affiliated with the University of Missouri. He is most interested in being included in the e-mail string of our loosely connected bio-fuels team.

I also talked briefly about our efforts to bring the internet to NU and other key public facilities and talked about meetings we have had with folks at the Pentagon and Camp Eggers (in Kabul) regarding this. I mentioned my meeting with Qualcomm where we may have the opportunity (a long shot) to utilize their CDMA technology at NU under one of Qualcomm's international grant programs. If this is successful it may be such that it could be replicated at the other five major universities in Afghanistan.

We declined a dinner invitation at the PRT (unfortunately where I knew they would have some sort of non-vegetarian dishes) because we were not yet hungry.

We returned to the guest house and mapped out some tentative plans for the rest of the time here. Susan and Fary made as substantial dent into the precious supply of Heineken.

Susan speaking: And how many of you truly believe the bit about the beer? It was a busy day and Steve has detailed it extensively. My observations are more about the area and the sights along the drive to Jalalabad. It all is poorer than I had imagined. Kabul (at least the little we saw of it out of the airport) is very, very bleak. It really reminds me of a combination of Tijuana, India and Egypt. The traffic is chaotic compared to what we are used to, but the drivers all seem to know when to "duck and weave". The area around Jalalabad is much greener, as Steve has always said. The guest house is in a lovely tree lined area and feels very safe and secure. More later.....

March 9

Yesterday was extremely busy. Susan, Fary and I went to the ILC at 8:00 AM and we experimented with using Skype (the free internet communication program) communicating with Dr. Fred Saba at SDSU and Dr. Steve Spencer at SDSU. Fred has prepared a Power Point presentation we will use today as we all work with the NU IT Steering committee.

Safi Dost joined us. He was one member of the Afghan Group Study Exchange Team (GSE) who came to San Diego in May of 2005.

Fary received a call requesting that we all go to the Public Hospital at 9:30 AM. To get to town requires that we drive through a river since the bridge is being rebuilt. That slows things down and after going through the river we got rerouted on some bypass through some back country.

There was some confusion when we got to the hospital but we were eventually met by Dr. Ali Ahmad Zahed, who is overseeing the polio immunization efforts for Afghanistan's Eastern Provinces. It turns out that Afghanistan will be experiencing National Immunization days for the next three days and this was the start of the campaign. A big tent was set up and speeches were being given. I was asked to make some comments on behalf of Rotary International. I was able to provide a historical perspective regarding Rotary's role in this effort and also to provide some up to date statistics regarding polio in Afghanistan—only 17 cases last year and two to date this year. After that Fary and I gave some polio drops to babies there for that occasion. Dr. Zahed then took us to his office and reviewed the immunization procedures for the Eastern Provinces. From there they took us to the room where the vaccine is being stored. We then visited one of the training rooms where men and a few women (all in burkas) were receiving their instructions. I was again asked to address the group. Everything was very well organized. We were asked to come back tomorrow to meet Dr. Tahir Mir from World Health Organization (WHO).

From there we went to NU Medical School and had a short visit with former GSE Team member Dr. Khalil.

We then went to IF Hope for a very nice lunch with Jim De Bruille who has been their director for several years. It was good to get Jim's read on the current situation. Their organization has had very good success even working in areas with difficult security challenges in planting trees. PRT and IF Hope point out that Nangarhar Province has gone from one of the highest poppy producing areas to eliminating about 90% of the crops through cooperative arrangements involving the national government, provincial government and local shiras. We talked about the potential use of bio-fuels and Jim points out that whatever is urged upon the farmers must have the most competitive economic return. That may be something other than poppies or bios fuels like almond trees or other crops. It looks like this will all relate to the price of oil—the higher the price of oil the more viable the bio-fuel crops will be to the farmers.

From there we met Drs. Mangal and Safi ullah. Both had recently been denied US visas to attend the LA Rotary Convention. It may be that they applied for the wrong type of visa. I will look into this to see if we can help.

We then went to DAI and met with Flouran Wali. We talked about DAI using their micro-enterprise division to help set up women with solar cooking projects—teaching them how to use solar cookers—how to make and sell solar cookers and how to use industrial solar cookers to start roadside business in the villages selling cooked food. We

will drop off our solar cooking stuff with Flouran today. We did not know we were going to have this meeting when we left the guest house in the morning.

We then went to Wali's shop and bought a HP 4-1 copier, printer, scanner, and fax-- although one can not send a fax to and from Jalalabad.

Then we went to the carpenter's shop where they are building a prototype trundle bunk bed for use in the female dormitory under construction.

We then returned to the guest house and were met by former GSE team member Hamed Kadwel. While visiting with him our IT specialist Shah Maqsood came to the guesthouse and worked on Fary's computer and installed the CDMA software on my computer. That allows me access to the internet using a device to plug into my USB port. I think it costs \$40 per month and Fary and I can share the same device while we are here.

Dr. Aziz then also joined all of us with some of his technicians. They did some electrical work at the guest house. We talked about the dormitory construction and issues relating to providing air conditioning and the security wall.

Everyone then left but soon we were in touch with the NU Chancellor and his wife who came to visit us at the end of the evening.

After they left we all went to bed rather tired-- mentally and physically. The pace should slow down from hereon.

Susan speaking: Yes, a full day indeed. Just getting to and from is quite a challenge. It is lovely to return to the peace and quiet of the guest house, an oasis of calm in an otherwise chaotic area. The people we have visited are warm and friendly, always ready to offer tea or a meal. Today there is going to be a demonstration at the University to protest the Danish cartoon that was republished in Denmark a bit ago. We are anticipating no violence or property damage. We will all be in the International Learning Center (which by the way has the plaque with Steve's name on the front) for the IT training session. There will be professors there, along with the Chancellor of the University, so we should have good information on the goings-on. Another update tomorrow!

March 9, 2008

There were demonstrations on the Nangarhar Campus while we were on campus. I am told these were on some of the national coverage on US TV. Will give more of a report tomorrow. No problems for us.

March 10

Short on time.

Yesterday morning we worked at the ILC (International Learning Center) with an interactive training session with Dr. Fred Saba from SDSU providing a lecture to the NU IT Steering Committee and then a larger group of university representatives—admin, faculty heads, professors and students (about 30 total) regarding the process for the development of an IT plan for the university. We used Yahoo Messenger for the two way video and simultaneously Skype for the two way audio. Fred gave the first presentation in English to the steering committee and the second presentation in Farsi. He did an excellent job and was well received. Not too much of Q&A followed. The challenge will be to keep up the momentum with the follow up meetings Fred will have remotely with the steering committee. Fary arranged for food and drinks following the session. I believe this was the first major event at the ILC.

The demonstration took place on campus while we were in session. In fact Fred had his TV on FOX and advised they were providing live pictures of the demonstration. We asked him to keep us advised on what was happening around us. We could hear chanting on bull horns but had no problem. As usual the locals were looking out for our well being.

We then had lunch at the guest house with Ishaq and from there went to a polio debriefing meeting. It was very interesting, the level of organization within the Afghan medical community. Many individuals are involved and they keep very good records regarding not only the number of immunizations but more importantly, the refusals or missed homes.

We then went to DAI for dinner with Flouran and her colleagues. It was an early evening when we returned to the guest house to get caught up on paperwork and libations.

Note some pictures are now posted on the journal page. One of the unlabeled ones is the polio training session— the one with the ladies in burkas.

Steve

Susan speaking: The day was much calmer than the day before, or perhaps I am getting used to the full days that Steve and Fary are used to doing. The only thing that Steve has not written about is the weather. It has been very nice....warm sunny days and clear cool nights. Today we are going to the Rotary school. It will be very exciting for me to see!

March 11

Yesterday started meeting with Dr. Aziz and Ishaq to review the construction plans for the female dormitory on the NU main campus. We want to provide air conditioners/heaters for all rooms and that was not in the original bid. That will probably add about \$10-15K to the contract. We also want co-axel cable run to all sleeping rooms. Dr. Saba's IT planning presentation made me think we need to plan for the future. Who knows, maybe they will have cable TV down the road or wired internet connection will

be better than wireless. We also reviewed the cost of the security wall-big ticket \$23K but it will enclose over an acre.

From there we went to the Rotary School where they were having a celebration during the boy's session for the first day of Spring. Many speeches were given including a short one by me. There are three very positive developments.

First USAID has assigned Shari Fazli 0799 162368 Fazil_af_2006@yahoo.com to our school to oversee teacher training. This is a two year assignment. He is well educated and his English is excellent. He is from Jalalabad. One of the biggest limitations at our school is the poor quality of the teaching. Now, for the first time this issue is being addressed in a professional way.

Second, a computer teacher has been assigned to our school—Mr. Hisbullah Saidyasin 072217539 hizbmuslim@hotmail.com He is paid for teaching one half day, the same as all teachers but he teaches a full day. He teaches the third grade boys in the morning when there is no electricity and teaches the boys in the computer lab when the electricity is on most afternoons. We have two issues: cost of fuel for the generator since the school has no funds and he works full time and is paid half time. He advises that if we can provide fuel for the generator, then he can teach the female teachers and female students computers in the morning and teach the boys computers in the afternoon. (Only boys attend classes in the mornings and only girls attend in the afternoon.) I think he will do this for the half time salary for now. So I will provide funds for the generator and see what happens. For next year we may wish to look into solar power to run the computer lab. DAI has found a solar company they are happy with. I need to chase that down.

The third development is that even with 10 female teachers with five paid for from the US, there is still a big shortage for the 1,100 female students. The female principal advised she knows of three additional female teachers qualified and willing to teach starting immediately. I approved their starting the next day (today) and we will cover their costs from the US \$60 per month-prorated for March-for the rest of the year. The UAID person will confirm this arrangement is working OK. So now we will be paying for eight female teachers at \$60 per month for \$480 per month. We need to do some more fundraising and for next year work to get the Afghan Department of Education to takeover more of these salaries.

The Palisades Group in San Diego has provided funds for a female teacher. They wanted one identified as the one they are sponsoring. We identified Ms. Shamima who agreed to be sponsored and we may try to figure out a way to establish communications. We need to be careful so that does not create any danger for her. We learned from Mr. Fazli that although the Rotary school is only about 10 miles outside of Jalalabad, the area is much more conservative relative to women's issues compared to Jalalabad City.

When the electricity came on we showed the Doyle DVD "a day in the life of the Doyle Elementary students" prepared by Rick Clark and dubbed in Pashto by Afghan Rotary Scholar Rafi Sayed studying at USD. About 200 girls were in the room with all eyes

glued to the projected picture. We left when they were playing it for a second time. It will be shown to the others when electricity is available or by using the generator.

The school says it now has 1,100 females and over 2,000 males but only about half those numbers were present. We were told the absenteeism was because there were no classes for the boys because of the Spring celebration.

We then went to the NU College of Education campus which is in downtown. I wanted to check out the female dorm there built by a Japanese ladies group. I wanted to see if any progress had been made in setting up the library in the room dedicated for that. I would like to consider putting in a computer lab there with internet. The room was bare. I checked out my CDMA connection and received a strong signal. I think for about \$10K to \$15 we can set up a computer lab 6-8 stations build desks and use CDMA technology for the connection for around \$40 to \$80 per month. I need to get more info from Qualcomm regarding this.

We then met with about 10 of the female residents who advised they have a nice dining hall but no kitchen. They get their food from a trough that is used for feeding a few hundred other people from somewhere. For about \$2,000 someone can outfit the kitchen that presently has no appliances. The residents may need to cook and cleanup for themselves. The Deputy Director of the Col. of Ed. said the Col. of Ed. would provide the food. I told them I promised nothing but would look into this.

We then came back to the GH and decompressed. With Dr. Aziz (the contractor) we toured the female dorm under construction next to the GH. It seems smaller than I thought but should be very nice. It will have the capacity to house 72 female residents when completed.

We then went to a dinner with the Rotary Club of Jalalabad. The restaurant is new in a new park. The setting was spectacular—like something in Europe—hard to describe.

There were over 20 Rotarians there-or potential Rotarians. Four or five new members will be joining the club—including Dr. Aziz and Dr. Ali Hazed who heads up the polio efforts for the Eastern Provinces. The meeting was conducted in English. It was a very impressive group of people. Susan commented she knew the names of over half of those in attendance. Eleven of those present hold medical degrees.

Dr. Ali Zahed gave a talk about the polio immunization efforts in the Eastern Provinces. The club offered its full support. There will be a subsequent meeting involving some of the Rotarians to work out the logistics for supporting the next NID (National Immunization Day) soon to follow.

Chancellor Hamadzai, a Rotarian was there. We received a surprise visit by Mr. Shirazy, Governor of Nangarhar Province. He advised that he heard of all the good work we are doing in Jalalabad and came by to personally thank us. He is a very powerful well respected person—also huge in stature—nicknamed “The Bulldozer”.

This day was rich with experiences and my mind is spinning as I think about follow up.

Steve

Susan gave a short talk about her perceptions of Afghanistan. Susan, Fary and I received gifts.

Susan speaking: Now I know why Steve is so detailed in his journals. It is almost impossible to remember names, discussions, and decisions for only a few hours, let alone several days. So you are all “enjoying” his personal diary and follow-up notes.

The school visit was surreal. After seeing so many pictures and hearing about the project for so many years, it was almost eerie being physically there. I had to keep pinching myself to make sure I was not dreaming! As Steve has written there are several issues and concerns with the school that need work, but I suppose that will always be the case. Progress everywhere here is slow, but hopefully sure. Today should be a quiet one with the only appointment being lunch with former GSE team member Safi Dost. By the way, those of you reading this who were involved with the GSE team in San Diego in 2005, you would be pleased to know that that experience seems to be a highlight with the members. We have talked with Dr. Khan, Dr. Khalil, Dr. Torokay, Hamid, and Safi. They all asked about their host families and express their great appreciation for your support and assistance while in the States. It warms my heart!

March 12

Yesterday started off with Fary, Ishaq and Maqsood arranging a video conference in the ILC. Dr. Marla Federe, our lead ESL professional in the US, was on Skype together with Afghan Rotary Scholars Sayad at USD and Israr at Central Michigan. Israr was live on the video- all were on audio addressing about 50 ESL second through fourth year English students at NU. Fary facilitated this event. It even survived a brief power outage.

We then reviewed some financial info with Ishaq. There is potential for confusion since we are involved with many things with differing funding sources and various restrictions on who can pay for what. Fortunately everyone is keeping good records.

From there we went to the English Department and viewed various facilities.

Safi Dost invited us to lunch at the Sharzy Stadium restaurant-where we had dinner last night. Ishaq and Maqsood joined us.

After lunch we stopped of at the store that sells the CDMA adapters to get some info regarding their product.

On the way back to the campus we stopped at the carpenter's shop to look at the prototype trundle bunk bed he has built. It should work great at \$280 per set up. We ordered 24 of these as part of the furnishing of the female dorm bedrooms.

Back at NU Fary and I visited the school on the NU campus that is grades 1-6 for boys and 1-12 for girls. It has a computer lab we may want to use if we are successful in getting the U.S. State Department Global Connections grant to connect high school students in the U.S. with high school students in Jalalabad. This school was recently built and equipped by the Germans. Their computer lab is a disaster. There were about 12 girls there but only two computers are working. The electricity was off. They have solar power but it is only good for about one and one half hours. They also have a generator.

We then looked for an ag professor to discuss bio-fuel but could not find one. Basically NU shuts down in the afternoon.

We then met with Dr. Aziz to review the final numbers of the security wall and air conditioners/heaters for the female dorm. The security wall will cost around \$26,500 and the air conditioners will cost around \$12,500. I prepared the quotation with the per item breakdown and gave it to Dr. Aziz.

We then met with the Dean of the NU School of Law and Political Science—Mr. Shir Ali (Amn). He has done much for the law school including building a moot court room. He would like to hold competitions we could judge from the states. He has a specific request regarding the need for forensic training and equipment relative thereto for the law school. He believes the lawyers being trained in criminal law need to have an understanding of how legal forensics work. I advised we would give this some thought. I think SDSU has a department of police science. Plus we need to learn about the police training presently underway in Afghanistan that is being provided on a contract basis by U.S. personnel.

As we were finishing that meeting the Chancellor stopped in for a social visit. We covered the things we had been working on and some of the next steps. He did advise that NU can easily set aside a couple hectares for some experimental crop production for bio-fuels.

Fary fixed a vegetarian dinner and we all went to work to make sure we did not leave any Heinekens behind as we prepare to leave.

This morning we leave at 7:00 AM for Kabul. We are scheduled to meet with the WHO polio folks at the UN compound at 10:30. Then we need to go to KAM Air to reconfirm our tickets. We then have a meeting at the Ministry of Higher Education with the WSU folks to finalize equipping and staffing of the ILC. We then will meet with the GSE team selected from the RC of Kabul. Finally we will have a dinner meeting with the RC of Kabul and RC of Logar. We will talk about how they can become involved in the polio efforts.

Susan speaking: Not much more to add, except that staying in the guest house on campus has added a different dimension to the visit according to Steve. I can see why.....we are here (some of the time) for people to just drop in. We have no control over the social visits! Makes the day a bit surprising.

March 13

We just finished breakfast at the Kabul Inn and saw on TV that a suicide bomber killed five near the Kabul Airport. We are several miles from there and heard nothing. It may affect our travel to the airport but we are advised this did not take place on the main road to the airport. We will leave for there in about an hour. We will have our international cell phone on until take off scheduled for 2:00 PM Afghan time today.

Yesterday we met for two and half hours at the World Health Organization office in the UN compound. We were with Dr. Rudi Tangermann and Dr. Tahir. Rudi is from WHO Geneva with major responsibilities for polio eradication and Dr. Tahir oversees the Afghanistan operation. We received a very detailed briefing regarding polio eradication efforts in Afghanistan. No time to get into the details now. My guess is Afghanistan and Pakistan will be the last two countries to get rid of polio because of the fighting and lack of security. But the number of cases in both countries is small—probably under 50 per country this year and maybe much less.

From there we went to the Ministry of Higher Education office and met with Abdul Hai from that office and Ryan Sain and Candice from Washington State University who are administering USAID funds for electronic learning.

It looks like WSU has full approval to provide about \$100,000 of funding for the ILC to set up an ANGeL Center (Afghanistan New Generation electronic Learning) under WSU's program to bridge the digital divide. World Bank through the MoHE will provide about another \$100,000 plus of funding to purchase the laptops, extra batteries, charging stations, heavy duty copier and dedicated bandwidth 1mgb down 256 K up. This should all happen pretty fast.

We also learned that NU has \$10,000,000 of funds available to it administered through the World Bank. This is to be used primarily for construction but Abdul Hai indicated the MoHE hopes some can be used for academic programs. This may be available to address the forensic Curriculum desired and equipment related to the same as requested by the Dean of the Law School and perhaps could be tapped into to fully develop the on-line medical English course we have been working on with University of California-San Diego. We need to talk to the Chancellor about this.

From there we went to the Kabul Inn. We met with the four Kabul Rotarians selected for the GSE team and provided an initial briefing as to what would be involved. We then adjourned for dinner at the Kabul Inn and were joined by three other Kabul Rotarians and by Matti-the secretary for the Rotary Club of Logar. We talked Rotary talk for a while. After dinner I gave a briefing on the polio eradication efforts underway in Afghanistan. I

talked about the challenges and the way Afghan Rotarians can be involved. Dr. Hizbullah- President of RC Kabul and Matti will follow up with WHO Dr. Tahir.

Back in our room Susan and I had the pleasure of listening to trucks going by throughout the night as our window was right next to the street...

So we are about to say good-bye to Afghanistan. If there is time I will make a final journal entry from Dubai.

Susan speaking: It will be a long way home starting this afternoon. We will be in constant transit except for our overnight in Dubai. We had hoped to have a chance to sightsee in Dubai for ½ day, but there was some confusion about our flight times, so it must be missed. I had been looking forward to it, but perhaps another time.

March 13, 2008

We are in Dubai. The Kabul suicide bombing turned out to be on the main road going to the airport. That was shut so we took a detour. We think about 15 were killed. It may have been targeted for coalition forces but most of the casualties were civilians. We went through ten security check points at the Kabul airport.

Other than that the day has gone well. We had a nice dinner with Fary at our hotel in Dubai and said our farewells as she heads on to Iran later this evening. We take our 16 hour flight to Houston tomorrow morning and should connect with Continental to get to San Diego tomorrow evening.

March 14, 2008--Friday evening

Susan and I just arrived home after being in transit for about twenty eight non stop hours. No problems, but I don't want to see the inside of a plane or airport for a while.