

BACKGROUND ON LINDA NORGROVE FROM COLLEAGUES

The following is from conversation with JODI ROSENSTEIN, colleague of LINDA NORGROVE.

Jodi gave a little bit of a background on the programme Linda was working on and her impressions of Linda; she was clear that she sees herself as a colleague of Linda's rather than a particularly close friend. She advised that Margaret Orwig is a close friend. Margaret is based in Kabul and is on 0706-240-770 and is willing to assist, probably once Linda is moved to BEK.

LN was recruited to the IDEA-NEW programme by Jonathan Greenham (UK National) who is the Programme Director. Linda was the DAI Regional Director for this programme in the Chawki/Dewagal District. Linda had over 350 local nationals involved in this programme.

IDEA-NEW

The programme is an alternative development programme based on the principle of providing licit alternative business, mainly agricultural based. It is very community focused and based, with 90% of the required materials for initiatives sourced through the local area. Projects include irrigation, farm to market roads, poultry and fishery projects. A key element is that Afghans must also invest (@ 2/3s of the start up costs). A principle of the programme is that it must not skew the local economy.

JODI ON LINDA

- Sees Linda as conservative, shy and quietly spoken.
- Without prompting Jodi stated that Linda converted to Islam 'as she sees herself at one with the people'.
- Linda is a Farsi speaker, who is also fluent in Dari.
- Jodi believes that Linda has some strongly held views on Afghanistan (that security is not the issue and that the military should not be involved).
- Linda moves up and down the Dewagal valley and Chowki district almost daily and is very well know in the local communities and 'up to ministerial level'.
- Linda is an 'activist... not a banner carrying one, but one who will get out there and do things.'
- Linda had pressed for a lower security profile as she saw herself as 'one of the people' and not at risk.
- Believes Linda comes from a tight community at home in Outer Hebrides.
- Linda was going to the opening ceremony of the Selar Canal (a \$700K irrigation project). Everyone in the valley would have known about what was a well publicised event.

OBSERVATIONS FROM JONATHAN GREENHAM (via telecom with JODI)

- Linda is a 'typical Scot, taciturn, reserved, does not show emotions', tough lady with internal strength.
- Very close to home, despite being abroad sees family 1-3 times a year. Family visited her in Cambodia.
- Has worked in Latin America, Cambodia and latterly Afghanistan. Jonathan met her when she was working in Herat with the UNDP and like the way she dealt with Afghans.
- He sees her as smart and analytical and thinks that 'not being able to walk is her idea'.
- She moved into Chowki well and developed good relationships, again sees herself at one with the people.
- He surmises that she will recognize that people who took her are 'bad Afghans', she will see the good in others.
- He doesn't think she'll be feeling let down (treatment notwithstanding), but will want to know why and will probably be trying to talk her way out.

- Linda felt that a low profile, community access and relationships were what would keep her safe.
- Jonathan mentioned that speculation amongst his community in Jalalabad was that Kunar NDS were involved in kidnap.
- She started learning Dari about 4-5 years ago, but does not speak Pashtu.
- Her colleagues who were also kidnapped speak Dari but have no English.
- Religious beliefs – Jonathan thinks that the belief held around the development community that she converted to Islam may be a misconception based on her behaviours. She is very interested in culture, does not publicly pray, drinks wine, but fasted during Ramadan (again to be at one with the people). He thinks she is more likely agnostic.
- Likes Chinese Green Tea.

OBSERVATIONS

- It is still not clear from the above whether Linda has converted to Islam or just observes practices to be culturally sensitive and aid her integrate into the community.
- Perhaps a concern is that she might not be as grateful to be rescued as one might think, and could respond badly to the death of her colleagues and even her captors. She may well believe she can talk her way out, or that traditional Afghan approaches to mediation (Elders) would be preferable to a military intervention.