



The Union for the Conservation of Raptors

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN
FALCONRY SAFARI CORPORATION & KAZAKHSTAN GOVERNMENT
FALCON MEETINGS – U.A.E. BLOCKS SUSTAINABLE-USE CONTRACT,
EXCERPT FROM THE JUNE 1 – 30, 1995 DAILY LOG OF ALAN HOWELL PARROT

June 28, 1995 – Wednesday: Almaty, Kazakhstan. Dmitry and I arrived at the Ministry of Ecology for an 11:00 AM meeting, to be greeted by two stuffy Brits that radiated a bird-dog tension that permeated the halls where we waited for the Deputy Minister to arrive. Kazakhstan Professors Kovshar & Gavrilov were exceedingly friendly as they welcomed us to this, our third Ministry meeting.

The Deputy Minister, a Kazakh named **Maydan I. Zharkenov**, warmly received everyone in his chambers. The two British researchers were introduced as **Dr. Nick Fox & Dr. R.J. Hornby**. They head a substantial commercial falcon breeding farm in the U.K. and a Houbara breeding project in the U.A.E.

I had heard of their work for some years, as they've trained a select few Arabs to approach Russian & Asian governments on political levels, falsely claiming they are conducting "scientific research" in order to justify a legal harvest of baby falcons & Houbari for their farms. Once Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby's feet were in the door during legal harvests, quantities of falcons have been removed illegally for their Arab employers, without benefit to the people or Government of Kazakhstan.

I understood these people to be our most vigorous potential enemies, as they've been removing scores of falcons for their commercial breeding facility in the U.K., all in the contrived disguise of sacred research science. Their reputation as scientists, and their income as providers of falcons to Gulf Royals is now on the line in this meeting at this moment in the Ministry.

UNNECESSARY CONFLICT BETWEEN RESEARCHERS & COMMERCIAL MARKET:

The nature of their activities permit access to untold numbers of wild falcons, without the presence of police or monitoring agents. As they are regarded as "scientists", which has the connotation of "sacred, non-commercial", they are usually trusted with unrestrained, unmonitored, unpoliced access to the resource. This image of non-commercial research activity is enhanced by an abundance of pamphlets, bogus research projects in the case of Drs. Fox & Hornby, and media propaganda.

My Grandfather A.B. Howell was a world-renowned ornithologist, mammalogist, & also a Professor of Anatomy at Johns Hopkins Medical School. He wrote many books & scientific articles. He once wrote a paper, observing that a few scientists in his day were inventing a complex vocabulary that only served to separate them from the masses and the common man. He predicted this would ultimately lead to an elitist hierarchy among researchers, whereby they exist in a realm beyond the system of checks & balances our public requires of civil servants. Ultimately, they can be judged only by their few peers, as the general public simply can't understand the rarefied world they live in, or what in the world they're talking about. The bottom-line result is unrestrained corruption, personal agendas and self-interest.



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I knew I was in the presence of just the sort of people Grandfather Howell talked about. Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby looked daggers across the room at Dmitry & myself, & displayed a tactile arrogance toward our Kazakhstan hosts. While their eyes & stiff body language betrayed a hostile intent, their verbiage was restrained and deceptive:

Dr. Fox inquired about our experience in capturing wild falcons for the sustainable-use commercial markets. I replied that my original company, Harlewyn Ltd., is the only company on the planet to have ever received permission openly to capture & export wild falcons destined for commercial markets. I explained in detail the extensive lobbying of Canadian elected & non-elected officials that was required in order to secure legal permissions. I described the difficulties inherent in such a sustainable-use program. I described financial details, public relations details, & training of Inuit peoples in falcon harvest management.

As if he hadn't heard a word, Dr. Fox again asked, "Yes, but what is your experience in conducting such a program?" I took this as a subtle attack, so I responded by describing how in Canada, the non-elected, Anglo biologists from southern Canadian Provinces wanted the falcon program to benefit & employ themselves, by using their helicopters, snowmobiles, trappers, etc. I opted instead to employ the Aboriginal Inuit of N.W.T., as our program was founded on the principle to train and benefit native peoples. This decision in 1981 resulted in a tug-of-war between the Anglo biologists and the Inuit. The biologists engaged in subterfuge at the expense of the program, myself, and [REDACTED] I finally canceled and scuttled the program after four years and well over \$400,000.00 in company expenditures.

Imagine if you will, a southern Anglo biologist sitting on a rock in the high Arctic, studying fox scat in -40°. Being aware that each White Gyrfalcon that flies over his head is easily worth \$50,000.00 in the Middle East, other pastures certainly look greener and warmer!

I explained to Dr. Fox that our program is designed to employ & train Kazakh Nationals in principals of sound game management on a sustainable-use basis. Our program is 1) a conservation program, (2) an anti-smuggling program, and (3) an anti-poverty, employment program -- all without expending any government funds.

I explained we would be ignoring our duties not to involve the citizens of the country in our project. But I added we will have no objection to bonafide scientific research in Kazakhstan, provided scientists pay market value for falcons and Houbari removed for research. I later learned that during their visit, Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby removed 5 Houbari with a conservative market value of \$5,000.00 - \$8,000.00 each -- Kazakhstan wasn't paid one red cent for the birds.

Dr. Fox was livid -- Dr. Hornby began stuttering. They both turned beet red, as they knew my response was directed at them. I took this angle only because their commitment to kill our program was apparent from their first inquiry regarding our qualifications to conduct a sustainable-use falcon capture Program.

I also explained the Minister & Deputy Minister have requested that Falconry Safari Corporation duplicate in Kazakhstan the same U.S. statutes that, among other things, assess 5 year jail sentences, \$100,000.00 fines, and confiscation of equipment, cars, & airplanes used in falcon smuggling activities. I gave the precise names of Arab leaders that are sending private jets to Kazakhstan & Mongolia for contraband falcons. I knew these individuals are the financiers for,



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and the directors and owners of Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby's "research" and "breeding" projects in the U.A.E. & the U.K.

I said that as soon as one gold-plated jet is caught in the act of moving contraband falcons, and confiscated by the Kazakhstan government, this will go a long way toward stopping smuggling activities, as nobody wants the expense or public embarrassment of such an incident.

Smuggling will then be limited to small independent operators who shall be intercepted by our informant-incentive program, and employment of citizen trappers who will not want to see the resource thieved at their expense.

PROHIBITIVE MEASURES DESIGNED TO KILL PROGRAM:

The Deputy Minister and the Kazakhstan Professors nodded approval of my points. Dr. Hornby looked at me in the way only a sly bureaucrat is capable, and suggested that we implement our law enforcement program before conducting a sustainable-use falcon capture program. I responded this would drain our financial resources, as it would require 1-2 years of administrative work by the Government of Kazakhstan, and I cannot be held financially responsible or liable for Kazakhstan's performance in expediting new environmental reform laws.

Then Dr. Hornby suggested we purchase hundreds of falcons from Arabs for release into Kazakhstan, to be the subject of a scientific study (which of course would be inconclusive!). He wanted this study to be undertaken prior to falcon harvests & sales. And obviously he had no regard for the most elementary biological principals advising against the release of non-native falcons into Kazakhstan's ecosystem.

I asked if his questions were intended to drain our coffers, and explained our commercial harvest will result in a net increase in falcons, because falcons we confiscate from smugglers are to be rented for six months in the Gulf – then returned to Kazakhstan for release as breeders. As such our falcon harvest is also a falcon conservation program, while he has erroneously assumed that each bird captured represents a mortal loss to the gene pool.

The Deputy Minister asked if I would pay the Ministry of Ecology U.S. \$2,000,000.00 to commit to my falcon program. I declined, saying that from my experience in Canada, we have no guarantee this program will not be obstructed by a variety of governmental bodies, even after our contract is signed. I'm not familiar with the degree of problems that can arise in this country -- problems that could stop the project. If our program is halted due to governmental in-fighting, we would lose \$2,000,000.00.

I explained we've committed up to U.S.D. \$700,000.00 to pay for (1) the falcon capture Program, (2) vehicles and technical equipment, (3) local employment of Kazakhstan citizens, (4) a Law Enforcement program to include a financial incentive program for citizens who report smugglers, and (5) a scientific exchange program between Kazakhstan & the United States.

The F.S.C. program is unprecedented -- nobody has ever done anything like this before, as it is cheaper for people to contrive clever "research" programs through which to steal falcons. It is even less expensive for people to directly smuggle falcons when they can now be acquired in



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Kazakhstan the bargain-basement street price of \$150.00 each. Our money is already at great risk, and I'm not prepared to further put my neck on a financial chopping block. The Deputy Minister appeared to accept my position as reasonable.

I explained to our Kazakhstan hosts not entirely familiar with business protocol, a beneficial sustainable-use program must result in a most essential element for business -- and that is cash flow. Indeed, cash flow is King, in the context of this Program. I said we won't run the program as if it's just another government Project paying out money while operating in the red. We'll show the Ministry how to make money and employ local indigenous people, as part of the anti-poverty component of sustainable-use Programs, and so they can look after their families and have decent, productive lives.

Dr. Fox then asked how we intend to weather objections by C.I.T.E.S. and the media. I detected this as a threat and took note -- I realized he may intend to plant negative propaganda in the news, intending to kill our program. I didn't tell Fox about my prior contact with C.I.T.E.S. where they tentatively agreed to monitor our sustainable-use, commercial falcon harvest. I said the Americans are generally pretty good with the media, and especially so when they have a reputation for obeying the most stringent laws and doing everything above-Board. All the newspaper & magazine stories about me in the U.S. & Canada have even been rather flattering, so the media is our friend, as far as we are concerned. I also made a veiled threat, indicating that Harlewyn Ltd. & Crème de la Crème, Inc. have employed close to 50 lawyers & their legal assistants since 1981, and of course anyone engaged in slander at my expense will be brought to task.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS:

The younger, less experienced member of Dr. Fox's four man team, Dr. Frederick Launay, made a brazen, frontal attack that I needed and wanted, in order to demonstrate their cheap modus operandi. Dr. Launay, who is the U.A.E. World Wildlife Fund (W.W.F.) representative and a well-known falcon smuggler, asked me to explain why the Canadian Government "confiscated 20 of your falcons trapped in Northwest Territories with the Eskimos, which are still retained in Canada".

When I attempted to contradict his fabrication & explain the details, Dr. Fox immediately cut me off, saying that we have a limited amount of time for the meeting -- a cheap trick on his part. I responded that since I was slandered in a manner intended to destroy my credibility in front of the Deputy Minister, I have a right to clear my name regardless of the time factor, and they have an obligation to listen. The Deputy Minister agreed.

I explained that at no time have any of my falcons been confiscated by the Government of Canada. All falcons captured with the Inuit Eskimos as part of our sustainable-use Program were exported to the Middle East without fanfare. In 1986 [REDACTED] I purchased 19 Gyrfalcons for \$160,000.00 with the blessings of the Canadian Government, after my assistance to the U.S. and Canadian governments in OPERATION FALCON. We paid for a farm on Vancouver Island, salaries, food & vet bills -- the total cost over a number of years exceeded \$350,000.00. When I told the caretaker, Frank Beebe, that I intended to move our Gyrfalcons to New Mexico, he refused to part with them.



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I explained the Supreme Court of British Columbia granted an “Ex Parte Seizure Order” – rarely given in Canada – in order that we could seize our falcons with assistance of one lawyer, two veterinary doctors, and two court bailiffs. I explained I successfully moved all falcons to the States only one month ago without impediment.

I also explained the caretaker is scheduled for court trial in March, 1996 where he will be involved in a substantial lawsuit. We already have an affidavit from his worker, John Hitchmough and C.I.T.E.S. export documents to indicate that Beebe and Hitchmough illegally exported the captive-bred progeny of our falcons to the Middle East, while claiming to myself that our falcons never produced even one offspring. By now Dr. Fox's junior assistant Dr. Launay had his tail between his legs, and Dr. Fox looked double daggers at him. Apparently Dr. Fox prefers genuine subterfuge, rather than the open attack demonstrated by his W.W.F. colleague.

Fox also raised the issue of my name, saying I was “hiding” under the identity of another name, Hari Har Singh Khalsa. I explained that I am a Sikh, and my identity is certainly not a secret, judging from my manner of dressing with a beard and turban. Nobody who wants to hide would wear 6 meters of white cotton on their head, and a beard to their navel. There is no way to blend in and “hide” with my appearance.

I explained to everyone present, that the blatant attack by Dr. Fox's group was improper, and we should all work together as one team. I said if we get into a 'pissing match', nobody will win. The Deputy Minister really liked my points, and everyone now clearly saw the color of our opponents across the table. That is just what I wanted. While Dr. Fox was previously respected as a cerebral, intellectual scientist, Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister could see something was amiss.

UNFOUNDED TECHNICAL OBJECTIONS:

I continued to answer all questions satisfactorily. Dr. Fox advertised his relationship with Sheikh Zayed by saying that His Highness gave him 107 falcons last year to release in Baluchistan (Pakistan) in order to see if they survive. Four falcons wore satellite back-pack transmitters. He said all four died, despite the fact they were strong birds. He said our falcons released in Kazakhstan after one season with Arabs will not survive after reintroduction to the wild.

I responded by saying that Sheikh Zayed has been releasing close to 400 falcons each season for the last 60 years. The only thing new was that his release activities were watched by a western observer, and not even for the first time. But there is nothing special or new about Arabs releasing falcons after the first season. So any sense of Nick Fox's self-importance due to introducing a “new” program is without basis in fact.

I then quoted the Peregrine Fund's falcon release program in the U.S. which has released thousands of captive-bred Peregrines since the 1970s. I was involved in the program as an undergraduate biology student at Cornell University. My work entailed Great Horned Owl predation on captive-released Peregrines.

I explained the Peregrine Fund has a thoroughly documented study supporting their program where juvenile Peregrines are given to falconers to train & hunt for one season, following which



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they are released back to nature. Their survivability exceeds that of wild falcons. Provided the falcons are reasonably healthy upon release, falconers birds are more experienced hunters more capable of surviving than first year migrants. I did not, however, explain the down-side to the Peregrine Fund's release Programs, that have salted wild falcon populations with non-native Peregrines that have caused deleterious genetic pollution of wild stock.

I said that Dr. Fox was only given 25% of Sheikh Zayed's falcons for release into Pakistan, and I suggested these were probably his worst and least healthy falcons that the U.A.E. President wanted to just get rid of and dump anywhere. Their low condition may have predisposed them to mortality at their time of release in Pakistan.

By contrast our own voucher program, providing a cash-incentive for Arabs to return their rented falcons for release in Kazakhstan, will only result in a dollar benefit to the Arab if he returns falcons in good health. Therefore Arabs should be financially motivated to return to us, rented falcons maintained in good condition for release.

I also quoted respected scientists in America who refuse to use satellite backpack transmitters on grounds they abrade feathers, expose raw flesh, and ultimately kill falcons. I stated the Pakistani release study was flawed, as backpacks should be used only on falcons whose short-term movement is to be monitored at the expense of the falcons' lives. Backpack transmitters should not be used to determine the survivability or longevity of falcons, or until the bird dies. The Pakistani falcon release study is flawed in that it states that 100% of released falcons with backpacks died due to Arab falconry – when there is more evidence to indicate they may have died *because of* the satellite backpacks.

At this point Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby looked at each other & shook their heads, as if to say, “We just can't win”. I would have preferred a “Win/Win” relationship, but their predisposed attitude necessitated a “Win/Lose” relationship, with Falconry Safari Corporation, the Kazakhstan Government, and the falcons as the real winners – with and Drs. Fox, Hornby, Launay and their teams of smugglers as the losers.

The Deputy Minister asked that everyone decide in today's meeting as to whether or not to vote in favor of our sustainable-use Project. The Deputy Minister and all the Kazakhstan scientists agreed to support the F.S.C. program, with the exception of Dr. Anatolij Kovshar (Kovshar was the recipient of huge funding for “research” from Dr. Fox and the National Avian Research Center). Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby now voiced feeble objections, calling for years of studies on falcon populations to determine harvest potential before we be permitted to embark on falcon exports.

I commented that the Arctic Fox has been harvested in numbers exceeding 100,000 foxes per annum, with no apparent decline in numbers, and without the benefit of a harvest/population study. Also, those foxes are all killed, while our falcons are rented in the Gulf, while they live & eat better than most people, to be released back to nature. Our sustainable-use program is not a consumptive 'take' of dead falcons. I also stated that it is an unfortunate reality that if we do not intervene with our conservation/anti-smuggling program, the falcon resource will be completely destroyed by Fox's smugglers within 1-2 years.



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Dr. Hornby & Dr. Fox (and even Kovshar) appeared limp when the Deputy Minister asked me to stay another month for detailed meetings with the Ministry to be followed by our Contract signing.

ORDER OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

I now added a final point, requesting the Deputy Minister instruct each person in the room to not discuss the details of the project or today's meeting outside the Ministry. I explained that since Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby demonstrated obvious and open hostility toward this project, and since their employers are the very Arab falcon buyers who benefit from acquiring unsustainable numbers of low-priced contraband falcons, it is prudent to prevent information leaks to the press until our public relations program is up-and-running after our Contract signing by President Nazarbayev.

The Deputy Minister was grateful for this foresight, and required that everyone agree to this as a confidential, closed-door meeting. When Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby appeared reluctant, the Deputy Minister made them repeat his promissory sentence, word for word, assuring the Deputy Minister that they will not speak of this meeting outside the Ministry doors. Fox and his team of pirates looked like “naughty schoolchildren” caught in the act.

Dr. Hornby said he had already heard of our proposal from the U.S., claiming that's why he came here for this meeting. As I later confirmed with our supporters Congressman Solarz and [REDACTED], there have been no leaks from our side -- this vague claim of U.S. awareness of the program was probably an invention by Dr. Hornby to justify future unilateral leaks from Hornby to our detriment, to be blamed on a fictitious U.S. colleague.

AFTER THE MEETING:

At the end of the meeting, Dmitry & I remained alone in the room with Dr. Fox, Dr. Hornby, and their two assistants. Dr. Fox came two inches from my face, unsteady with rage and shaking like an earthquake victim while wagging his finger in my nose. His volcanic fury had so overwhelmed him, that I knew I was facing a man unbalanced by something beyond the issues of today.

He said he was going to tell his supervisor Mohammed Al-Bowardi that I had revealed to the Deputy Minister that the U.A.E. smuggled Altai falcons from Kazakhstan. I reminded him of the Deputy Ministers orders of confidentiality, as well as his agreement. Fox flipped his head to the side, sniggered, and proclaimed to his friends that he didn't care about the Deputy Minister's instructions, or his own promise of confidentiality. He attempted to qualify his promise-breaking, by saying his employer is Mohammed Al-Bowardi -- not the Deputy Minister, and he will absolutely tell all details to Al-Bowardi as well as to other Arabs, in defiance of orders from the Deputy Minister. He even threatened to use Mohammed Al-Bowardi against me! He rudely repeated his threats. These were real threats by a raving lunatic, and they were all shouted at me two inches in front of my face!

I know Al-Bowardi from years past. He is a secretary to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed and a close friend of the U.A.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan. As a real bottom-feeding opportunist, Bowardi has sold hundreds of falcon telemetry units to the Royal Family at vastly



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inflated prices. He also built low quality telemetry units he claims are custom-made in Australia. He's also in the business of selling falcons, also advertised in his brochures. I understand Bowardi's latest venture is to finance Fox's unimaginative "research" programs to gain access to thousands of marketable, priceless, contraband falcons.

For example, Bowardi's "National Avian Research Center" brochures state the "N.A.R.C. is breeding falcons in its U.K. captive breeding center". The brochures state "these birds are carefully bred and trained (for falconry)." Yet they have the audacity to characterize themselves as "a research organization" in their pamphlets. Over the years they have sold many thousands of falcons – and by far, the great majority of these on the black market.

N.A.R.C. states they're against the removal of falcons from nature, as they intend to influence the market with their prized and expensive farm falcons -- i.e. their program is established to eliminate a harvest of wild falcons in Kazakhstan & elsewhere. Their brochure states, "The possession (sale) of these prized (expensive) birds by falconers reduces their need to take falcons from the wild."

They further state that among the N.A.R.C.'s "six objectives" are "To breed in captivity selected (rare, expensive) species of falcons and train them for falconry." These falcons are not given away for free, but are exchanged for substantial financial benefit to themselves and their organization. Their own literature condemns Dr. Fox & the N.A.R.C.

I listened to Dr. Fox's tyrannical threats. I responded, politely saying I was so terrified that I was urinating in my pants. He assaulted me again, now shouting his odious threats at me again. He was so wild, and I felt strangely calm. I retorted, "while you are speaking, a small puddle is now forming on the floor around my shoes". I reminded Dr. Fox that he can fool most of the people most of the time with his bogus "research" programs, but he can't fool all the people all of the time. Truth prevails.

Dr. Fox exclaimed that falcon prices "must stay down", in order to take away incentives" for smugglers. What kind of propaganda is this? Fox himself sells his female farm falcons in the Gulf for prices not less than U.S. \$15,000, and very often much more. And, Fox didn't want to see Kazakhstan benefit from a sustainable-use resource market. Even if falcon prices "stay down" as Fox intends – even today's \$150.00 street-price for local, contraband falcons is still a figure representing 3 months of the average worker's salary in Kazakhstan, and so many people will still be motivated to smuggle falcons, even if their selling prices were less than \$150. Heaven knows, a number of traders have even begged me to buy Snow Leopard skins for \$25.

Rather, I think Dr. Fox understands our proposal will dominate his market, and that his "research" (commercial extraction) operations will be eclipsed by F.S.C./Kazakhstan centralized auctions. If his Arab financiers have access to scores of legal wild falcons through an auction-rental Program – why should they continue to finance & promote Fox's and N.A.R.C.'s back-door access to falcons, and black market extractions? In it's role as a Trojan Horse for supplying today's black market, the N.A.R.C. itself is threatened by our centralized rental-auctions – auctions which among other features, provide falcons at more reasonable acquisition costs, because middlemen like Fox and Bowardi are removed from the equation.



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On a side note Fox admitted that “most of the breeding adult Saker falcons in Kazakhstan have been removed by smugglers, and there are practically no productive aeries remaining in the Country”. I responded by saying that I wasn’t surprised, since he has Presided over extractions to the Gulf, and he has been the “Keeper of the Gate ever since the carnage began”.

Dr. Fox said Kazakhstan will unilaterally break our contract after we teach them how to catch falcons. However in our defense, Fox is unaware of the complexity of our program which will require unique, indispensable talents to be applied to the auction, the falcon management, management of clientele, advertising, etc. He also said the Kazakhstan government is so corrupt that I “can't even imagine the scope” -- he's probably right there. I agreed, saying, "of course I can't imagine the level of corruption that you yourself have promoted in Kazakhstan”.

In the face of Fox's threats I concluded the meeting with a promise. I predicted that Dr. Fox & Dr. Hornby will lose, if they choose an adversarial relationship instead of a publicly transparent, collaborative relationship – subject to peer review – into which I'm inviting them as a gentleman. Our program is logical, and is based on sound economic & biological principles which I'm not shy to expose to public scrutiny. By comparison, Fox and the N.A.R.C. programs couldn't survive one day of media exposure and scrutiny in the scientific community, and they know it. When I asked Dr. Fox if he would like me to provide the press with the details of his so-called "research" (extraction) programs, he and his “co-conspirators” stomped out of the room in a rage.

We've won this little battle, but the war continues to rage on. I know Fox, Hornby, Launay, Bowardi, and N.A.R.C. attempt some form of subterfuge or attack against us in the future. With good grace and fortune, we are well prepared for any assault.