SECRET

PAGE 01
ORIGIN NODS-00
INFO LOG-00 CCOE-00 SAS-00 /000R

DRAFTED BT:S/S-O:JROBERTS
APPROVED BY:S/S-O:JMROBERTS

O 111908Z NOV 98 ZFF5
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE

SECRET STATE 210511

NODIS

FOLLOWING ISLAMABAD 08410 DATE 11 NOV 98, SENT ACTION
SECSTATE BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO
QUOTE

SECRET ISLAMABAD 008410

DECAPTIONED

NODIS

DEPT FOR F, SA, S/CT, DS, AND SA/PAB; PLEASE ALSO PASS TO EMBASSIES
ABU DHABI, CAIRO, AND RIYADH; AND CONSULATES KARACHI, LAHORE, AND
SECRET

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PESHAWAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/11/08
TAGS: PREL, PTER, ASEC, AF, SA, PK
SUBJ: USAMA BIN LADIN: MESSAGE DELIVERED TO TALIBAN
REPRESENTATIVE

REFS: (A) STATE 210367
    (B) ISLAMABAD 8369
    (C) FBIS DTG 101055Z NOV 98
    (D) FBIS DTG 071002Z NOV 98

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. MILAM. REASONS: 1.5
1. (S) SUMMARY: IN A NOVEMBER 11 MEETING, THE AMBASSADOR DELIVERED REF A TALKING POINTS ON TERRORIST USAMA BIN LADIN TO LOCAL TALIBAN REPRESENTATIVE HAQQANI. IN RESPONSE, HAQQANI DID NOT SAY MUCH NEW ON BIN LADIN, BASICALLY STICKING TO THE TALIBAN'S HARD-LINE STANCE ON THE ISSUE. FOR EXAMPLE, HE STRESSED THAT BIN LADIN HAD TO BE TRIED BY THE TALIBAN SINCE AFGHANISTAN DID NOT HAVE EXTRADITION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT BIN LADIN WAS TOTALLY UNDER CONTROL. HAQQANI ALSO BROUGHT UP [ALTHOUGH NOT AN IMPORTANT TALIBAN FIGURE BY ANY MEANS, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT HAQQANI WILL SEND THIS LATEST U.S. MESSAGE ON TO KANDAHAR RIGHT AWAY. END SUMMARY.

DELIVERING U.S. POINTS

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WE WANT TO TRY HIM IN AFGHANISTAN

3. (S) CONTINUING, HAQQANI STRESSED THAT THE TALIBAN DID NOT HAVE ANY EXTRADITION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, THEY HAVE DECIDED TO TRY BIN LADIN IN AFGHANISTAN. THE DIFFERENCE WITH U.S. VIEWS IS THAT THE U.S. WANTS TO TRY HIM IN A THIRD-COUNTRY.
THESE ISSUES CAN BE DISCUSSED. THERE IS NO NEED TO RESORT TO THREATS OR FORCE. SPEAKING RhetORICALLY, HAQQANI ASKED THE AMBASSADOR WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH TRYING HIM IN AFGHANISTAN? THE SECRET

AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT BIN LADIN'S TERRORIST ACTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD. AMERICANS, SAUDIS, KENYANS, TANZANIANS, AND MANY OTHERS HAVE DIED. HIS TERRORIST ACTIONS HAVE OCCURRED IN MANY PLACES. THEREFORE, OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S., SAUDI ARABIA, KENYA, AND TANZANIA, INTER ALIA, HAVE A DIRECT INTEREST IN SEEING HIM BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. HAQQANI SNEERedly RESPONDED THAT THE SAUDI ATTITUDE WAS, IN FACT, UNCLEAR: FOR EXAMPLE,

THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT

THE TALIBAN SHOULD LOOK TO WHAT CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH SAID DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PAKISTAN WHEN HE EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE FACT THAT BIN LADIN WAS HARBORED IN AFGHANISTAN. (NOTE: AFTER THE MEETING, THE EMBASSY SENT OVER A NOVEMBER 11 ARTICLE IN A PAKISTANI NEWSPAPER CITING CROWN PRINCE AS REITERATING CONCERNS ABOUT BIN LADIN DURING A RECENT INTERVIEW.)

BIN LADIN IS UNDER CONTROL

4. (S) SHIFTING FOCUS, HAQQANI SAID THE U.S. WAS INCORRECT: BIN LADIN WAS NOW UNDER FULL TALIBAN CONTROL AND IN NO POSITION TO COMMIT TERRORIST ACTS. REFLECTING BACK TO AN EARLIER POINT (SEE PARA TWO), HAQQANI SAID BIN LADIN COULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF HIS SUPPORTERS OR OF PEOPLE WHO HAD TRAINED WITH HIM YEARS AGO. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MAY BE TAKING THE TERRORIST ACTIONS. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE U.S. AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY KNOWS THAT BIN LADIN REMAINS A CLEAR THREAT TO THEIR CITIZENS. HE WANTS TO STRIKE AND IS IN CONTACT WITH HIS NETWORK. HE WAS ALSO DANGEROUS TO THE TALIBAN AND THEY WERE JUST SECRET

GETTING THEMSELVES DEEPER INTO PROBLEMS BY HARBORING HIM.

CONCERN ABOUT REPORTED STATEMENTS

5. (S) THE AMBASSADOR ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY THE MEETING TO EXPRESS HIS PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT RECENT STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE TALIBAN IN WHICH THEY REPORTEDLY SAID U.S.

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IT WAS INCUMBENT ON THE TALIBAN TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE IN THAT LIGHT. AGREING WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S POINT, HAQQANI REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE OMAR HAD MADE THE STATEMENT; THIS WAS PROBABLY ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE PRESS GETTING THINGS WRONG.

COMMENT

6. (S) HAQQANI IS NOT VERY HIGH UP IN THE TALIBAN HIERARCHY AND HE IS NOT KNOWN TO BE PARTICULARLY WELL-PLUGGED IN. HOWEVER, IN THE PAST HE HAS DELIVERED OUR MESSAGES TO KANDAHAR, SO THIS LATEST EXPRESSION OF U.S. CONCERN WILL BE PASSED ON TO OMAR SOON. HAQQANI'S COMMENTS CONTAINED LITTLE THAT THE TALIBAN HAVE NOT BEEN SAYING PUBLICLY. AS WITH OTHER INTERLOCUTORS IN RECENT DAYS (SEE REF B), HAQQANI BROUGHT UP

END COMMENT.
MILAM UNQUOTE TALBOTT

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Current Class: SECRET