1. (C) SUMMARY: IN A TELEPHONE CALL ON AN OPEN LINE EARLY
CONFIDENTIAL

AUGUST 22, TALIBAN SUPREME LEADER MULLAH OMAR TOLD A STATE
DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL IN WASHINGTON THAT THE TALIBAN WAS OPEN
TO THE SUGGESTION OF ESTABLISHING A VEHICLE FOR SECURE
COMMUNICATION WITH USG OFFICIALS, POSSIBLY THROUGH
AMBASSADOR ISLAMABAD. WHILE OMAR PARROTED SOME OF BIN
LADEN'S HARD-LINE VIEWS, HE LISTENED TO U.S. ARGUMENTS ON
THE REASONS FOR THE U.S. ATTACKS IN AFGHANISTAN AND SUDAN
AND THE REASONS WHY BIN LADEN'S CONTINUED ACTIVITIES WERE
NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. OMAR WARNED THAT
THE U.S. STRIKES WOULD PROVE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND AROUSE
ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD. WHILE HE WAS
IN NO WAY THREATENING, HE CLAIMED THAT THE STRIKES COULD
SPARK MORE TERRORIST ATTACKS. HE ASKED FOR EVIDENCE OF BIN
LADEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN TERRORIST ACTIONS. END SUMMARY

2. (C) _______________________________ WHO IS A SUPPORTER OF AFGHANISTAN'S TALIBAN MOVEMENT APPROACHED SA/PAB DIRECTOR MALINOWSKI AUGUST 21 TO SEE IF HE WAS WILLING TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE OF THE TALIBAN'S TOP LEADERS. MALINOWSKI TOLD _______ THAT HE WAS ALWAYS OPEN TO SUCH COMMUNICATION IF IT WAS SERIOUS. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF AUGUST 22, MALINOWSKI WAS CALLED AT HOME AND HOOKED INTO A CONFERENCE CALL ON AN OPEN LINE WITH

AND TALIBAN HEADQUARTERS IN KANDAHAR. SERVED AS TRANSLATOR. AFTER CONVERSATION BEGAN WITH A TALIBAN AIDE, MULLAH OMAR SURPRISINGLY CAME ON THE LINE AND ENGAGED WITH MALINOWSKI. THIS IS THE FIRST CONTACT THAT WE KNOW OF BETWEEN THE RECLUSIVE MULLAH OMAR AND A USG OFFICIAL. OMAR ASKED FOR THE BONA FIDES OF CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 154712 230225Z MALINOWSKI, WHICH THE TRANSLATOR PROVIDED. THE TRANSLATOR, FAMILIAR WITH OMAR'S VOICE FROM PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS, VOICED THAT IT WAS OMAR.

3. (C) MALINOWSKI NOTED THAT WE HAD MUCH TO SPEAK ABOUT, ESPECIALLY THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF OSAMA BIN LADEN IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE THREAT THAT BIN LADEN POSED TO AMERICANS. OMAR REPLIED THAT, WHILE HE HAD NO PARTICULAR MESSAGE FOR US, HE WAS OPEN TO DIALOGUE. MALINOWSKI SUGGESTED THAT OPEN TELEPHONE LINES WERE INAPPROPRIATE FOR THAT SERIOUS DIALOGUE AND SUGGESTED THAT IT BE BEST CONDUCTED IN PERSON WITH OFFICIALS OF OUR EMBASSY IN ISLAMABAD. OMAR COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT WE COULD ENGAGE WITH THE TALIBAN'S REPRESENTATIVES IN ISLAMABAD.

4. (C) OMAR SAID THAT WHILE HE HAD NO SPECIFIC MESSAGE HE DID HAVE SOME ADVICE. HE SAID THAT IN ORDER TO REBUILD U.S. POPULARITY IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND BECAUSE OF HIS CURRENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES CONGRESS SHOULD FORCE PRESIDENT CLINTON TO RESIGN. HE SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE OF NO EVIDENCE THAT BIN LADEN HAD ENGAGED IN OR PLANNED TERRORIST ACTS WHILE ON AFGHAN SOIL. PARROTING MUCH OF BIN LADEN'S USUAL RHETORIC, OMAR SAID THAT THE U.S. SHOULD REMOVE ITS FORCES FROM THE GULF AND HE WARNED THAT THE U.S. WAS SEEN AS A THREAT TO ISLAM'S HOLIEST SITES, INCLUDING THE KABBAB. HE ADDED THAT EVENTUALLY THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA WOULD FORCE THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT TO EXPEL THE AMERICANS.

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5. (C) OMAR WARNED THAT THE STRIKES WOULD BE COUNTER-
PRODUCTIVE TO THE U.S. THEY COULD SPARK MORE, NOT LESS,
SOLIDARITY AGAINST THE U.S. THE ISLAMIC WORLD WOULD RALLY
TO AFGHANISTAN'S SIDE IN THE FACE OF THE ATTACKS. OMAR
EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS HIS BEST ADVICE AND THAT HE WAS
CONCERNED OVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE STRIKES.

6. (C) ON BIN LADEN, OMAR SAID THAT GETTING RID OF ONE
INDIVIDUAL WOULD NOT END THE PROBLEMS POSED TO THE U.S. BY
THE ISLAMIC WORLD. HE AGAIN SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN NO HARD
EVIDENCE AGAINST BIN LADEN.

7. (C) MALINOWSKI REPLIED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE
EVIDENCE AGAINST BIN LADEN AND THAT THE EVIDENCE WAS SOLID.
HE NOTED THAT OMAR AND THE TALIBAN SHOULD BE WELL AWARE OF
WHAT BIN LADEN HAD BEEN UP TO IN AFGHANISTAN. HE SAID THAT
THE U.S. SOLELY HAD ACTED OUT OF SELF DEFENSE; THE
PRESIDENT HAD ACTED AS A FATHER WHO HAD TO PROTECT HIS
CHILDREN FROM JEOPARDY. OUR STRIKES IN NO WAY WERE
DIRECTED AGAINST THE AFGHAN PEOPLE OR THE TALIBAN. OMAR
SHOULD KNOW THAT THE U.S. HAD BEEN A FRIEND TO THE AFGHANS
AND WANTED ONLY THE BEST FOR AFGHANISTAN. PICKING UP ON
OMAR'S OBSERVATION THAT AFGHANISTAN NEEDED RECONSTRUCTION
ASSISTANCE, MALINOWSKI OBSERVED THAT RECONSTRUCTION COULD
NOT BE EXPECTED TO START AS LONG AS AFGHANISTAN REMAINED IN
TURMOIL AND AS LONG AS BIN LADEN WAS POSING A THREAT FROM
ITS SOIL.

8. (C) TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF PUSHTUNWALI, OR THE CODE
OF BEHAVIOR FOR THE PUSHTUNS THAT IS OFTEN USED AS TALIBAN
RATIONALIZATION FOR THE CONTINUED SHELTERING OF BIN LADEN
CONFIDENTIAL

9. (C) USING PUBLIC STATEMENTS, MALINOWSKI URGED OMAR TO
PLACE BIN LADEN AND OTHER TERRORISTS IN CUSTODY OR EXPEL
THEM FROM AFGHANISTAN.
10. (C) OMAR CONDUCTED HIMSELF IN A CAREFUL AND
CONTROLLED MANNER. AT NO TIME DID HE BLUSTER OR THREATEN.

11. (C) COMMENT: OMAR'S CONTACT WITH A USG OFFICIAL IS
RATHER REMARKABLE, GIVEN HIS RECLUSE NATURE AND HIS PAST
AVOIDANCE OF CONTACT WITH ALL THINGS AMERICAN. IT IS
INDICATIVE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF HOW THE TALIBAN VIEW THE
U.S. STRIKES AND OUR ANGER OVER BIN LADEN. THE TALIBAN,

DESPITE IMPLYING THAT WE SHOULD INITIATE THE CONTACT, ARE
INTERESTED IN A DIALOGUE WITH US ON BIN LADEN AND OTHER
ISSUES. THIS IS A LONG WAY, HOWEVER, FROM THE TALIBAN
DOING THE RIGHT THING ON BIN LADEN.

12. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
ALBRIGHT

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