REleased in Part
B1, 1.5(D)

CONFIDENTIAL  PTQ9154

PAGE 01  DUSHAN 00515  01 OF 03  210405Z
ACTION EUR-01

INFO LOG-00  AID-01  BIB-01  SMEC-00  OASY-00  DOEE-00  H-01
TEDE-00  INR-00  IO-13  L-01  ADS-00  MOFM-04  MOF-03
M-00  NEA-01  NSAE-00  NSCE-00  OIC-02  OMB-01  PA-01
PM-00  PRS-01  P-01  SB-00  SCT-00  SP-00  SSO-00
SS-00  TRSE-00  T-00  USIE-00  SA-01  SNIS-00  NISC-01
PMB-00  PRME-01  DRL-09  G-00  044W

O 210343Z FEB 95
FM AMBASSAD OR DUSHANBE
TO SECFSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1758
INFO AMBASSAD OR NEW DELHI
AMBASSAD OR TASHKENT
AMBASSAD OR ASHGABAT
AMBASSAD OR MOSCOW
AMBASSAD OR ISLAMABAD
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L  S E C T I O N  0 1  O F  0 3  D U S H A N B E  0 0 0 5 1 5

E. O. 12356: DECL: 2/20/05
TAGS: PREL, UN, AF, US
SUBJECT: RABBIANI EMISSARY STATES RABBIANI WILL NOT SURRENDER
- POWER TO INTERIM COUNCIL UNTIL TALIBAN JOIN

CONFIDENTIAL
3. DURING AN ALMOST TWO HOUR MEETING WITH AMB AND POL/ECON CHIEF, RABBANI’S ECONOMIC ADVISOR AND SPECIAL EMISSARY (AND ACTING HEAD OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL BANK), ASHRAF SHAH, SOUGHT U.S. ADVICE FOR RABBANI IN LIGHT OF THE RISE IN POWER OF THE TALIBAN AND THE ECLIPSE OF HEKMATYAR’S POWER. SHAH DEPICTED THE TALIBAN AS A LARGELY DURRANI PASHTUN, RURAL, UNSOPHISTICATED, DEEPLY SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE FORCE UNLIKELY TO WIN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF KABULIS BUT IN CONTROL OF SIX PROVINCES AND ENJOYING A DEGREE OF POPULAR SUPPORT. THUS, HE ARGUED, IT WAS IMPORTANT THEY JOIN THE INTERIM COUNCIL — BEFORE RABBANI TRANSFERS POWER TO THE COUNCIL, LEST IT BE DEAD UPON ARRIVAL. WE ADVISED SHAH THAT IT WAS STILL BETTER THAT RABBANI SURRENDER POWER TO MESTIRI’S PLANNED INTERIM COUNCIL NOW. WE SEEK DEPT’S LATEST GUIDANCE ON MESTIRIS PLAN AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER QUESTION TO SHARE WITH SHAH. END SUMMARY.

INTRODUCTION

4. ASHRAF SHAH, ECONOMIC ADVISOR AND SPECIAL EMISSARY OF RABBANI, SOUGHT AN URGENT MEETING WITH AMB AND POL/ECON CHIEF FEB 20. PREVIOUS EVENING HE ARRIVED IN DUSHANBE CONFIDENTIAL
TALIBAN - A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH BUT UNLIKELY TO FIND GREAT POPULAR SUPPORT AMONG KABULIS

5. SHAH SUMMARIZED EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE MUJAHEDIN TAKE-OVER FROM THE SOVIETS, LAMENTED THE DWINDLING NUMBER OF EDUCATED "PROGRESSIVE" AFGHANS REMAINING IN AFGHANISTAN, AND FOCUSED ON RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS -- PARTICULARLY THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN AND THE DIMUNITION OF HEKMATYAR'S POWER.

6. ON THE TALIBAN, SHAH PORTRAYED THEM AS A PREDOMINANTLY DURRANI PASHTUN, LARGELY RURAL, UNSOPHISTICATED, EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE FORCE. THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN GAINING CONTROL OF SIX PROVINCES (HELMAND, KANDAHAR, ZABUL, GHAZNI, WARDAK, AND PAKTIKA), AND, THEREFORE, A SIGNIFICANT FORCE WITH WHOM TO BE RECKONED. WE NOTE THAT RADIO KHORASAN FEB 19 REPORTED THE TALIBAN TOOK CONTROL OF PAKTIKA PROVINCE WITHOUT A FIGHT AS FORCES OF JAMIAT-I ISLAMI (RABBANI) AND HARIKAT-I INQILAB-I ISLAMI (MUHAMMAD NABI) IN EFFECT HANDED THEM THE PROVINCE.

7. THE TALIBAN ARE ALSO A DEEPLY CONSERVATIVE FORCE, BENT ON CONFIDENTIAL
AMONG THE MORE URBANIZED, SOPHISTICATED INHABITANTS OF KABUL. THEIR PREDOMINANT DURRANI PASHTUN ETHNICITY WOULD ALSO WORK AGAINST THEM IN WINNING OVER THE POPULACE OF KABUL.

8. NEVERTHELESS, SHAH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE TALIBAN ENJOYED A DEGREE OF POPULAR SUPPORT IN THE AREAS THEY NOW CONTROLLED BECAUSE THEY HAD DISARMED RIVAL MUJAHEDIN GROUPS AND RESTORED SECURITY, PARTICULARLY FOR ROAD TRAVEL.

HEKMATYAR, A SPENT FORCE

9. SHAH CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS OF THE PREVIOUS WEEK OF AN EASY
O 210343Z FEB 95
FM AMBENASSY DUSHANBE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1759
INFO AMBENASSY NEW DELHI
AMBASSY TASHKENT
AMBASSY ASHGABAT
AMBASSY MOSCOW
AMBASSY ISLAMABAD
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 02 OF 03 DUSHANBE 000515

E. O. 12356: DECL: 2/20/05
TAGS: PREL, UN, AP, US
SUBJECT: RABBANI EMISSARY STATES RABBANI WILL NOT SURRENDER
-POWER TO INTERIM COUNCIL UNTIL TALIBAN JOIN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DUSHAN 00515 02 OF 03 210405Z
TALIBAN VICTORY OVER HEKMATYAR AT CHARASIAH. HE CLAIMED THAT
MASUD'S FORCES ACTUALLY ENTERED CHARASIAH ONE DAY BEFORE THE
TALIBAN ARRIVED, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HEKMATYAR'S FORCES FLED THE
CITY. MASUD'S FORCES TOOK POSSESSION OF HEKMATYAR'S HEAVY
WEAPONRY ABANDONED IN THEIR HASTY FLIGHT. MASUD'S FORCES, IN
TURN, ALSO VACATED THE CITY AT THE REQUEST OF THE TALIBAN, TAKING
THEIR NEWLY GAINED WEAPONRY WITH THEM. AT THE SAME TIME AS
OCCUPYING CHARASIAH, THE TALIBAN TOOK MAYDAN SHAHR AND CHOWK-I
WARDAK, AS WELL AS THE ROAD FROM GHAZNI LEADING TO KABUL, TO
CONTROL TOTALLY WARDAK PROVINCE.

10. SHAH CLAIMED HEKMATYAR HAD NOW FLED TO LAGHMAN, LEAVING
SAROBI (ALTHOUGH HIG FORCES STILL CONTROLLED SAROBI). MANY OF
HIS COMMANDERS HAD DISPERSED EVEN WIDER AFIELD FROM CHARASIAH.
HEKMATYAR NOW ONLY CONTROLLED ONE PROVINCE, LAGHMAN, IN SHAH'S
ASSUMPTION. WITH THE LOSS OF HEAVY WEAPONRY, THE DISPERSAL OF HIS COMMANDERS, AND EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER ONLY ONE PROVINCE, SHAH PRONOUNCED HEKMATyar A SPENT MILITARY FORCE.


SEEKING U.S. ADVICE

12. AMB AND POL/ECON CHIEF NOTED THAT AMB MESTIRI WAS IN KABUL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03    DUSHAN 00515 02 OF 03 210405Z
AND THAT TODAY, FEB 20, WAS THE DATE PRESIDENT RABBANI WAS SUPPOSED TO TURN OVER POWER TO THE INTERIM COUNCIL MESTIRI HAD SO PAINSTAKINGLY PIECED TOGETHER. SHAH, IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HE HAD DESCRIBED ABOVE, ASKED FOR U.S. ADVICE. WE RESPONDED THAT THE USG CONTINUED TO STRONGLY SUPPORT MESTIRI’S EFFORTS. WE BELIEVED THAT RABBANI SHOULD STILL TURN OVER POWER TO THE INTERIM COUNCIL UNDER UN AUSPICES. NOT TO DO SO NOW WOULD BE A SEVERE SETBACK TO UN EFFORTS AND MIGHT PROVIDE THE TALIBAN AN EXCUSE TO MAKE WAR ON KABUL. IN ADDITION, AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO BRING INTO EXISTENCE AN AFGHAN GOVERNING BODY OF GREATER LEGITIMACY IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD BE LOST.

13. SHAH ARGUED THAT CONDITIONS HAD CHANGED SINCE MESTIRI’S PLANNED INTERIM COUNCIL. ALTHOUGH RABBANI STILL INTENDED TO RESIGN AT SOME TIME, HE SHOULD NOT TURN OVER POWER TO THE INTERIM COUNCIL IF THE TALIBAN WERE NOT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. IF THE POWERFUL TALIBAN, WHICH ENJOYED SOME DEGREE OF POPULAR SUPPORT, DID NOT JOIN THE COUNCIL, IT WOULD BE DEAD UPON ARRIVAL. WE RESPONDED THAT MESTIRI AND HIS AIDEs WERE TALKING TO THE TALIBAN AND TRYING TO GAIN THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTERIM COUNCIL. FROM
THE LITTLE WE KNEW ABOUT THE TALIBAN LEADERS, IT APPEARED THEY
HAD NOT RULED OUT COOPERATION WITH MESTIRI -- ALTHOUGH THEY HAD
FREQUENTLY RAINED AGAINST THE MUJAHEDIN LEADERS AND THEIR
TANZIMAT. ALL IN ALL, WE BELIEVED IT BETTER FOR RABBANI TO
SURRENDER POWER TO THE INTERIM COUNCIL, WHILE MESTIRI WORKED TO
BRING ALONG THE TALIBAN.

14. SHAH ACKNOWLEDGED THE RATIONALE OF SOME OF OUR ARGUMENTS
BUT HELD TO HIS BELIEF THAT RABBANI SHOULD NOT SURRENDER POWER AT
THIS TIME. HE ASKED THAT WE CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO WASHINGTON
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DUSHAN 00515 02 OF 03 210405Z
POLICY-MAKERS, WHICH WE PROMISED TO DO.

COMMENT

---

B1
ACTION REQUEST

18. SEPTEL SEEKS SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPT IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUERY FROM SHAH. AT THE TIME WE RESPOND TO SHAH ON THAT QUESTION, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPT CONCERNING CURRENT U.S. POLICY VIS-A-VIS MESTIRI’S PLANNED INTERIM COUNCIL AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER QUESTION, WHICH WE WOULD LIKE ALSO TO SHARE WITH SHAH. OUR INTERLOCUTOR WILL WAIT IN DUSHANBE A DAY OR TWO LONGER FOR FURTHER ELABORATION.

ESCUDERO