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ACTION SA-01

INFO  LOG-00  ACDA-08  ACDE-00  INLB-01  AID-00  CIAE-00  SMEC-00
   INL-01  DODE-00  DOEE-00  SRPP-00  DS-00  EB-00  EUR-01
   FBIE-00  H-01  IM-01  TEDE-00  INR-00  IO-00  LAB-01
   L-01  ADS-00  MMP-00  NEA-01  DCP-01  NSAIE-00  NSCE-00
   OIC-02  OMB-01  OPIC-01  PA-00  PM-00  PRS-00  P-00
   SCT-00  SP-00  SSO-00  STR-00  TRSE-00  T-00  USIE-00
   ASDS-01  SNIS-00  NISC-00  PMB-00  DSCC-00  PRM-01  DRL-04
   G-00  NFAT-00  SAS-00  /028W

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PM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECMST WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8131
INFO AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
AMEMBASSY ALMATY
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
DIA WASHINGTON DC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL
CURRENTLY CLASSIFIED:

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1998ISLAMA05058

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USCINCENCT MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/CCJ3/CCJ5/POLAD//
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY DHAKA

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DEPT FOR SA/PAB, S/CT, DRL, AND EUR/CACEN; PARIS FOR POL/RAVELING;
LONDON FOR POL/SUTPHIN; GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/2/08
TAGS: PGOV, KISL, BAID, PHUM, PTER, AF, PK
SUBJ: AFGHANISTAN: IN JULY 2 MEETING, DEFENDS DISCRIMINATORY EDICTS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND CONTROLS ON NGO'S

REFS: (A) STATE 119660
- (B) ISLAMABAD 5010
- (C) PESHAWAR 473
- (D) ISLAMABAD 4877
- (E) ISLAMABAD 4502, AND PREVIOUS

(U) CLASSIFIED BY JOE NOVAK, ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR. REASONS:
1.5 (C)(D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN A JULY 2 MEETING WITH [REDACTED], ACTING POLCOUNS URGED THE TALIBAN TO WITHDRAW RECENT EDICTS THAT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND IMPOSE NEW CONTROLS ON FOREIGN NGO'S. [REDACTED] WHILE NOTING HIS PERSONAL DISCOMFORT WITH THE EDICTS, DEFENDED THEM, ADDING THAT THE TALIBAN ARE ANGERED BY COMPLAINTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IN DISCUSSING OTHER ISSUES: [REDACTED] SAID THE PAK/IRAN PEACE EFFORT WAS A NON-STARTER; ADMITTED THAT THE GOP HAS COMMITTED TO GIVE MONEY TO THE TALIBAN; CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ASSERTED THAT THE TALIBAN HAVE ENACTED TOUGH NEW CONTROLS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF TERRORIST FINANCIER BIN LADIN. END SUMMARY.

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URGING THAT THE EDICTS BE WITHDRAWN

2. (C) ACTING POLCOUNS MET JULY 2 WITH NOTING THE DAMAGE RECENT TALIBAN ACTIONS IN THE HUMANITARIAN/HUMAN RIGHTS SPHERE HAVE CAUSED TO THEIR ALREADY-FALTERING INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION, POLCOUNS USED THE MEETING TO URGEPUSH KABUL TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

-- WITHDRAW THE EDICT CLOSING HOME-BASED SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS IN KABUL.
-- WITHDRAW THE EDICT REQUIRING WOMEN TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CLOSE MALE RELATIVE DURING MEDICAL TREATMENT.
-- WITHDRAW A RECENT EDICT THAT REQUIRES FOREIGN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO’S) TO RELOCATE THEIR OFFICES TO A SINGLE, ISOLATED COMPOUND.

POLCOUNS UNDERLINED THE POINT THAT RECENT TALIBAN EDICTS AND ACTIONS ARE DISCRIMINATORY TOWARD WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND A PROVOCATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WHICH IS COMMITTED TO HELPING ALL AFGHANS, IRREGARDLESS OF GENDER OR ETHNICITY. THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONTROLS ON NGO’S POSES A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF NGO’S AND IMPINGES ON THEIR ABILITY TO ASSIST AFGHANS. OVERALL, RECENT TALIBAN ACTIONS THREATEN THE VIABILITY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN.

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EDICTS DEFENDED

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3. (C) WHILE NOTING THAT HE DID NOT PERSONALLY SUPPORT ALL TALIBAN ACTIONS, AN OBVIOUSLY UNCOMFORTABLE COMMENTED THAT HE WAS COMMITTED TO DEFENDING THE TALIBAN EDICTS. TAKING POLOFF’S POINTS ONE-BY-ONE, SAID THE FOLLOWING:

-- THE TALIBAN CLOSED THE HOME-BASED SCHOOLS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT

-- THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS TOTALLY MISUNDERSTOOD THE EDICT ABOUT WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HOSPITALS. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAVE NOT HELPED BUILD ENOUGH HOSPITALS WITH SEPARATE FACILITIES FOR WOMEN.

-- NGO'S ARE BEING RELOCATED TO AN AREA OF KABUL THAT IS MORE SECURE. THEY WILL LIKE THAT AREA WHEN THEY GO THERE.

MOVING ON TO A MORE GENERAL PLANE, OBSERVED THAT THE U.S.?
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DISCRIMINATORY EDICTS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND CONTROLS ON NGO'S

AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMUNITY HAVE

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LITTLE LEVERAGE OVER THE TALIBAN -- "THE TALIBAN LEADERSHIP DOES NOT LIKE YOU TOO MUCH -- ALL YOU DO IS COMPLAIN." POLCOUNS, NOTING THAT MUCH OF THE IRANIAN PEACE EFFORT (REF D), WHICH INVOLVES SENDING REPRESENTATIVES TO MAZAR-I-SHARIF AND KANDAHAR TO DISCUSS WAYS TO BRING THE Factions TOGETHER FOR FACE-TO-FACE TALKS. REPLIED THAT THE TALIBAN WOULD MEET WITH THE PAK/iran TEAM; IN

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FACT, THE TEAM MIGHT HAVE ALREADY VISITED KANDAHAR. NONETHELESS, THE TALIBAN DID NOT THINK THAT THE EFFORT WOULD RESULT IN TOO MUCH.

ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THIS LAST POINT, STATED THAT THE TALIBAN SIMPLY COULD NOT TRUST ANY PEACE EFFORT THAT INVOLVED THE IRANIANS -- "IRAN DOES NOT WANT PEACE. WE (the TALIBAN) KNOW THEY ARE OUT TO DESTROY US. THEY (THE IRANIANS) ARE PROVIDING HUGE AMOUNTS OF WEAPONS TO OUR OPPONENTS."

ASSISTANCE FROM PAKISTAN

5. (C) POLCOUNS ASKED ABOUT REPORTS THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT RECENTLY AGREED TO PROVIDE THE TALIBAN 300 MILLION RUPEES (USD SIX MILLION) (REF B). MUJAHID SAID THE INFORMATION WAS TRUE; THE MONEY WAS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ROAD RECONSTRUCTION. PAKISTAN HAD ALREADY PROVIDED 400 TONS OF FOOD ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM THE GHORBAND AREA OF CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN WHO ARE NOW LIVING IN KABUL. POLCOUNS REJOINED THAT THERE WERE REPORTS THAT THE 300 MILLION RUPEES WAS EARMARKED TO GO TO PAY THE SALARIES OF TALIBAN OFFICIALS AND MILITARY COMMANDERS,
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NOT HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES.  SMILED AND COMMENTED THAT -- IN ANY CASE -- PAKISTAN HAD NOT SENT THE MONEY TO THE TALIBAN AS OF YET. POLCOUNS ASKED IF THE GOP HAD PROMISED THE TALIBAN A CASH DELIVERY AND SAID YES.

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BIN LADIN REPORTEDLY "UNDER CONTROL" IN KANDAHAR

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6.  (C) TURNING TO COUNTERTERRORISM, POLCOUNS ASKED ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE STATUS OF TERRORIST FINANCIER USAMA BIN LADIN.  RESPONDED THAT BIN LADIN IS NOW "UNDER CONTROL" IN KANDAHAR. (NOTE:  IN MAY AND EARLY JUNE, BIN LADIN WAS IN KHOST PROVINCE, GIVING PRESS STATEMENTS THREATENING THE U.S. -- SEE REF E.) TALIBAN AUTHORITIES HAVE "ENACTED TOUGH NEW CONTROLS," INSTRUCTING BIN LADIN THAT HE MUST CLEAR ALL OF HIS ACTIVITIES WITH THE TALIBAN, INCLUDING HIS PRESS INTERVIEWS.  BIN LADIN HAS TOLD THE TALIBAN THAT HE WILL FROM NOW FULLY "SUBMIT" TO THEIR CONTROL.  (SAUDI INTELLIGENCE) CHIEF PRINCE TURKI HAD RECENTLY VISITED KANDAHAR AND MADE STRONG POINTS TO THE TALIBAN ON BIN LADIN, RELATED IT MIGHT BE EASIER IF THE TALIBAN "JUST FORCED BIN LADIN OUT OF THE COUNTRY." HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, TALIBAN LEADER MULLAH OMAR HAD COMMITTED HIMSELF, AND WOULD NOT TURN AGAINST BIN LADIN.

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A NEW REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW YORK?

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7. (C) IN CLOSING, CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TALIBAN MIGHT REPLACE ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW YORK, ABDUL WAHAB.  WAHAB, HE ASSERTED, IS EXTREMELY UNPOPULAR AMONG MEMBERS OF THE AFGHAN COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.  HE IS NOT RESPONDING TO THEIR CONCERNS, PARTIALLY BECAUSE HE DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH
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WELL. THE TALIBAN ARE CONSIDERING REPLACING HIM WITH SHER MOHAMMAD STANAKZAI, THE FORMER KABUL "DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER" WHO IS NOW WORKING IN THE "MINISTRY OF PLANNING."

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COMMENT
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8. (C) [REDACTED] GAVE VERY LITTLE INDICATION THAT [REDACTED] WOULD BACK DOWN ANYTIME SOON FROM THEIR RECENT HARD-LINE EDICTS. HOWEVER, HE UNDERLINED THAT HE WOULD PASS U.S. VIEWS TO KABUL AND KANDAHAR -- WHERE, OF COURSE, WE HAVE VERY LITTLE INFLUENCE.

SIMONS

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