November 7, 2001

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: The Secretary
FROM: INR – Carl W. Ford, Jr.
SUBJECT: Pakistan—Poll Shows Strong and Growing Public Support for Taliban

President Musharraf faces a problem with public opinion that goes far beyond the minority of extremist Muslims. A just-completed INR poll shows the Pakistani public as a whole is now more favorable toward the Taliban than it was before the attacks of September 11 and recognizes no compelling reasons to cut Pakistan’s traditionally strong links with the Taliban government. Poll findings document the difficulty and dangers of Musharraf’s alignment with the U.S.

Polling began shortly after September 11; almost all interviews were completed before the start of bombing in Afghanistan. During this period, when the Pakistani government distanced itself from the Taliban, and public opinion:
• Favored by a wide margin increasing support for Mullah Omar’s regime. (46%, up from 38% last June)

• Saw the Taliban more favorably than it had before the September 11 attacks (52%, up nearly 20 points since last June).

• Believed by a sizable majority that the Taliban are not a threat to stability in the region and that Pakistan’s ties with the Taliban are good.
File Name: 011107 Taliban in Pakistan