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ACTION NODS-00

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DECAPTIONED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL
CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 5 FEB 2031
APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASE
REASON(S): B1, 1.4(D)
DATE/ID: 05 MAR 2009 200805703

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TAGS: MOPS, PREL, EAID
SUBJECT: AFGHAN SUPPLEMENTAL-OMB RULES SHOULD

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann for reason 1.4 (d).

Madame Secretary,
A Taliban leader [redacted] "You have all the clocks but we have all the time." We must take the strategic offensive to create a sense of movement in governance and development that draws Afghans to help because they believe we are winning. The supplemental decision recommendation to minimize economic assistance and leave out infrastructure plays to the Taliban strategy, not to ours.

B1

The President told me that I should tell you and him what we need; and that is to break through the blockages on transport and energy that are hampering Afghan development everywhere we turn.

I am told that infrastructure is not an emergency thus it cannot be part of the supplemental. Then it should be in the '07 budget. But I am told that it is too late to change '07 -- even though I made the recommendation for more roads, power, and agriculture assistance in September. So, of the USD 230 million in roads and energy we recommended for the supplemental we add nothing now and the recommendation we made for '07 has been reduced. Accordingly we would lose two years on the speed with which we ought to move forward on cutting through these blockages.

This will not cost us the war. But our pace on reconstruction will damage Afghan confidence. Revitalizing agriculture will suffer if goods cannot get to market and power is not available for

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. HEDGBETH, DAS, A/ISS
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factories. Without power agro-business will be slower to get started and without business the GOA cannot tax. With agriculture moving slowly -- and without all of your proposed USD 75 million in agriculture -- I believe we will see an increase in opium poppy production next year. With uncertainty, with less quick impact funding in PRTs, without roads to get to hospitals or markets or move troops the Taliban message that time is on their side will resonate.

I am told that we have enough unobligated funds to cover the gap and we should shift priorities. Part of this argument is bogus. Release of appropriated funds from Washington has been painfully slow. The '05 supplemental only began to reach us in September. I still do not have one penny of the '06 budget. Yet I agree that the rate of obligation has been too slow. But it is rising and I promise you that it will rise dramatically in the next year. But if we reprogram millions for infrastructure to keep up the pace I believe essential, then we must take it from projects that we were soon going to do in health, women's development and education -- from building the capacity we know Afghanistan must have for the future. And we must not take it from agriculture since we are only able to work in a fraction of the poppy growing provinces now.

The lack of some USD 400 million will not lose the war. But it will make the narcotics problem worse by next year. It will make it slower to build the Afghan government outside Kabul. It will make the margin of our victory tighter and the Taliban's role easier.

Every member of Congress who has visited Kabul has left persuaded of the need for supplemental funding for infrastructure. I believe you could sell this package as part of a war effort that should not be compelled to follow all peace time rules.

We have dared so greatly, and spent so much in blood and money that to try to skimp on what is needed for victory seems to me too risky.

Madame Secretary, I know that you and the President must weigh exceedingly difficult risks about which I know nothing. If you believe we cannot have more, then I and my mission will do all in our power to win with what we have. I mean no disrespect to your views. Your support since my appointment has been

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unflagging. But I feel that I would be doing less than my duty -- to you, the President and the country -- if I did not lay these views before you.

Respectfully,

Ronald E. Neumann
Ambassador to Afghanistan

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