

CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED

P 31, 1.5 (d)
(h)

DOCUMENT_ID: 179756317
DOCNO: 005964
PRODUCER: ISLAMABAD
SOURCE: STATE
DOCTYPE: IN
DOR: 19980806
TOR: 090926
DOCPREC: O
ORIGDATE: 199808061308
MHFNO: 98 2330506
DOCCLASS: C

HEADER

OO RUEAIIA
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
MSI9548
OO RUEHC
DE RUEHIL #5964/01 2181308
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 061308Z AUG 98
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9046
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 6258
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 3955
RUEHDB/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 3374
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 4489
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0235
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 3132
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1333
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 2910
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/CCJ3/CCJ5/POLAD// PRIORITY
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 3336
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 1797
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2070
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1581
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3437
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0472
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1915
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4179
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0711
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9683
BT

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify
Date 6/9/03 Exemption B1

CONTROLS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 005964

DEPT FOR SA/PAB AND EUR/CACEN; LONDON FOR POL/SUTPHIN; PARIS FOR
POL/RAVELING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/6/08

TEXT

TAGS: PGOV, MOPS, KISL, AF, PK
COMBINE: COMPLETE

UNCLASSIFIED

5

SUBJ: AFGHANISTAN: EVIDENCE NOT THERE TO PROVE ASSERTIONS THAT
PAK TROOPS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED TO ASSIST TALIBAN IN THE NORTH

REFS: (A) FBIS LONDON DTG 051447Z AUG 98
- (B) FBIS LONDON DTG 040915Z AUG 98
- (C) ISLAMABAD 5928, AND PREVIOUS

(U) CLASSIFIED BY JOHN SCHIMDT, POLITICAL COUNSELOR. REASONS: 1.5
(C) (D).

1. (U) THIS MESSAGE WAS COORDINATED WITH CONSULATE PESHAWAR.
2. (C) SUMMARY: SINCE THE TALIBAN BEGAN TO MAKE THEIR GAINS IN THE NORTH THIS PAST JULY, THERE HAS BEEN AN EVER-INCREASING DRUMBEAT OF CHARGES BY NORTHERN FACTIONS AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS THAT PAKISTANI MILITARY FORCES ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING. DESPITE THE CLAMOR AND ALL THE CONVICTION, THE EVIDENCE IS JUST NOT THERE TO SUPPORT THESE CLAIMS. HOWEVER, IT DOES SEEM POSSIBLE THAT THE TALIBAN MAY BE BENEFITING FROM THE PRESENCE OF SOME PAKISTANI MILITARY ADVISERS. IN ADDITION, NO ONE -- THE TALIBAN AND GOP INCLUDED -- DENIES THAT PAKISTANI CIVILIAN VOLUNTEERS ARE AT THE FRONT, APPARENTLY IN LARGE NUMBERS. END SUMMARY.

CLAIMS THAT PAKISTANI TROOPS ASSIST TALIBAN

3. (C) SINCE THE TALIBAN ADVANCED INTO FARYAB PROVINCE IN EARLY JULY AND THEN UNEXPECTEDLY CAPTURED THE KEY CITY OF SHIBARGHAN ON AUGUST 2, THE NORTHERN FACTIONS AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS HAVE STEPPED UP ASSERTIONS THAT THE ARMED FORCES OF PAKISTAN HAVE INTERVENED ON BEHALF OF THE TALIBAN. FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN AUGUST 6 MEETING WITH POLOFF, [REDACTED] CLAIMED THAT PAKISTANI ARMY UNITS ARE "LEADING THE CHARGE" FOR THE TALIBAN IN THE NORTH. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, PAKISTANI AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT ARE FERRYING ARMS-RELATED SUPPLIES TO THE TALIBAN FORCES IN THE NORTH, INCLUDING TO SUCH PLACES AS THE RECENTLY-CAPTURED MAIMANA AIRFIELD IN FARYAB PROVINCE. [REDACTED] MADE SIMILAR POINTS TO POLOFF IN AN AUGUST 3 MEETING. B1
4. (C) MEANWHILE, A NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVE -- [REDACTED] -- IN AN AUGUST 5 CONVERSATION SAID HE WAS "ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN" THAT PAKISTANI MILITARY UNITS WERE DEPLOYED WITH THE TALIBAN AND WERE CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE OFFENSIVE. (NOTE: SEE REFS A AND B FOR MORE ASSERTIONS OF THIS SORT ABOUT THE PAKISTANI ROLE.) B1

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

5. (C) WHEN CHALLENGED ABOUT THESE CLAIMS BY POLOFF, THE REACTION AMONG NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHERS HAS BEEN ONE OF AMAZEMENT THAT ANYONE COULD DOUBT IT. [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF POINT-BLANK THAT IT B1

WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE TALIBAN COULD "DO IT ALL ON THEIR OWN."
ASSURED POLOFF THAT "EVIDENCE WAS NOT NECESSARY" BECAUSE
IT WAS "IMPOSSIBLE TO COME BY ANYWAY." HE THEN REPEATED
CLAIM THAT THE TALIBAN WERE IN NO POSITION TO LAUNCH SUCH AN
OFFENSIVE ON THEIR OWN. IN FACT, THEIR OFFENSIVE HAD ALL OF THE
INDELIBLE TRACES OF A PAKISTANI MILITARY OPERATION: "LOOK, THE
TALIBAN ARE MOVING WITH A PURPOSE, CAREFULLY WATCHING THEIR SUPPLY
LINES. THIS IS UNLIKE THE WAY THEY USED TO OPERATE. THE
PAKISTANIS ARE TEACHING THEM THESE THINGS,"

B1
B1

B1

EVIDENCE OF PAK TROOPS IS NOT THERE

6. (C) IN THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, POLOFF HAS ASKED A NUMBER OF
SOURCES WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF PAK TROOP INVOLVEMENT.
(NOTE: NATURALLY, THE GOP AND THE TALIBAN EXPLICITLY DENY THE
ACCUSATION.) BASED ON THEIR RESPONSES POLOFF'S CONCLUSION IS THAT
THE EVIDENCE IS JUST NOT THERE

B1

A SAMPLE OF THE COMMENTS OF OBSERVERS:

AN AFGHAN BUSINESSMAN WHO HOLDS ANTI-TALIBAN VIEWS,
TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 6 THAT HE HAD JUST ARRIVED FROM HERAT, THE
TALIBAN'S MAIN BASE FOR RESUPPLYING THEIR NORTHERN FORCES. IN
HERAT, HE HAD SEEN MANY TALIBAN MOVING NORTH, BUT NO PAK TROOPS.

B1

--- TOLD POLOFF
AUGUST 3 THAT HE HAD VISITED SHIBARGHAN LATE LAST WEEK BEFORE THE
TALIBAN TAKEOVER. HE ASKED NIMA OFFICERS TO BACK UP THEIR CLAIMS
ABOUT PAK TROOPS: THEY PROVIDED NO EVIDENCE.
(NOTE: ---

B1

--- HAD A DIFFERENT
IMPRESSION, LATER TELLING INTERLOCUTORS THAT HE SAW A "DISTINCT
PATTERN" OF GOP INVOLVEMENT. END NOTE.)

B1

-- IN AN AUGUST 5 MEETING,

--- A PARTY
AFFILIATED WITH THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE), SCOFFED AT THE REPORTS OF
INVOLVEMENT BY PAKISTANI TROOPS, ASSERTING THAT HE HAS BEEN PRESENT
AT MEETINGS WHERE NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVES TALKED ABOUT USING THIS
CLAIM AS PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE TALIBAN.

B1

POSSIBLY SOME ADVISERS

7. (C) ALTHOUGH INTERLOCUTORS DISCOUNTED REPORTS OF PAKISTANI
TROOP INVOLVEMENT, THEY LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT A SMALL
NUMBER OF PAKISTANI MILITARY ADVISERS MAY BE HELPING THE TALIBAN.
--- TOLD POLOFF THAT HE HAD HEARD RELIABLE REPORTS
THAT "A COUPLE OF PAKISTANI MILITARY MEN" HAD BEEN SEEN IN MAIMANA.

B1

--- IN AN AUGUST 5 MEETING WITH POLOFF, ADMITTED -- WITH
A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE -- THAT "WE (PAKISTAN) MAY HAVE SOME MEN
CLOSELY MONITORING THE SITUATION." --- WENT ON TO INTIMATE THAT

B1

B1

SOME OFFICIALS ATTACHED TO THE PAKISTANI CONSULATE IN HERAT MAY HAVE TRAVELLED TO THE NORTH. QUERIED ABOUT THE WHEREABOUTS OF COLONEL IMAN (RETD), THE PAK CONSUL GENERAL IN HERAT (WHO IS KNOWN TO MAINTAIN VERY CLOSE LINKS TO THE TALIBAN), SAID HE WAS NOT SURE, BUT THEN ADDED "HE (IMAN) IS PROBABLY AROUND THE ACTION AS USUAL."

B1

EVERYONE AGREES ABOUT PAKISTANI NATIONALS

8. (C) ONE POINT THAT EVERYONE AGREES ON IS THAT TALIBAN RANKS ARE FULL OF PAKISTANI NATIONALS. MOST OBSERVERS CLAIM THAT MOST OF THESE PAKISTANIS ARE PASHTUNS (LIKE MOST TALIBAN) FROM THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE (NWFP) AND BALOCHISTAN. THERE MAY ALSO BE SOME PUNJABIS. MOST OF THE PAKISTANIS APPEAR TO BE VOLUNTEERS WHO JOINED TO SUPPORT THE TALIBAN'S ISLAMIC CRUSADE. THE TALIBAN DO NOT BOTHER TO DENY ALL OF THIS, NOR DO GOP OFFICIALS. WHEN PRESSED AS TO WHY THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT IS NOT STOPPING ITS NATIONALS FROM CROSSING THE BORDER TO ASSIST ONE OF THE SIDES IN A CIVIL WAR,] THREW UP HIS HANDS AND REPLIED:

B1

"YOU KNOW THE BORDER. IT IS EXTREMELY POROUS. THE SOVIETS TRIED TO SEAL IT IN THE 1980'S WITH THOUSANDS OF TROOPS AND THEY FAILED. WE TRY TO MAKE CHECKS IN CHAMAN (BALOCHISTAN) AND TORKHAM (NWFP) BORDER POINTS, BUT WE CANNOT KEEP UP WITH THE TRAFFIC. BESIDES, MANY OF THE PRO-TALIBAN ELEMENTS SLIP OVER THROUGH THE TRIBAL AREAS."

9. (C) THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT PAKISTANIS ARE CURRENTLY CROSSING THE BORDER IN LARGE NUMBERS; MOST SEEM TO HAVE GONE THERE IN 1996-97. AS TO NUMBERS, IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION HOW MANY OF THE 10,000 OR SO TALIBAN TROOPS IN THE NORTH ARE PAKISTANI.

B1

THE GENERALLY PRO-TALIBAN SON OF A WELL-KNOWN POLITICAL/RELIGIOUS LEADER, TOLD POLOFF THAT HE WOULD GUESS 20 PERCENT OF THE TALIBAN FORCE IS PAKISTANI. POLOFF HAS HEARD OTHER ESTIMATES THAT PLACE THE FIGURE AS HIGH AS 40 PERCENT.

ARABS

10. (C) THERE ARE ALSO SOME CLAIMS THAT ARAB EXTREMISTS HAVE JOINED THE TALIBAN FORCE IN THE NORTH. TOLD POLOFF THAT THERE ARE "DOZENS OF ARABS" IN FARYAB NOW. HE ADDED THAT SAUDI TERRORIST USAMA BIN LADIN IS PAYING FOR THE UPKEEP FOR THESE ARABS THROUGH AN OFFICE IN HERAT. HOWEVER,] HAD NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS.

B1

B1

COMMENT

11. (C) UNTIL EVIDENCE COMES TO LIGHT, THE CLAIM THAT PAKISTANI ARMY UNITS ARE HELPING THE TALIBAN IS EASY TO DISCOUNT. IT WAS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNCLASSIFIED

EVIDENT THAT THE NORTHERN FACTIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS ONLY BEGAN TO HARP ON THIS CLAIM WHEN THE NORTH BEGAN ITS SLIDE. BLAMING PAKISTAN MAKES SOME SENSE FOR THE NORTH IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. THE TRUTH THAT IT HAS BEEN (AT LEAST TEMPORARILY) OUTFOXED BY THE TALIBAN IS PROBABLY DIFFICULT TO TAKE. INDEED, THE TALIBAN HAVE ENGAGED IN A SIMILAR TACTIC IN THE PAST WHEN THEY WERE TAKING IT ON THE CHIN -- IN THEIR CASE, BLAMING IRAN AND RUSSIA, AND OTHERS. HOWEVER, WITH ALL THAT SAID, THE GOP COULD POSSIBLY BE DOING MORE TO PREVENT ITS NATIONALS FROM CROSSING AN INTERNATIONAL FRONTIER (EVEN A POROUS ONE) TO FIGHT IN A WAR IN A NEIGHBORING STATE. IN ADDITION, AS ELABORATED ON ABOVE, IT APPEARS POSSIBLE THAT THE TALIBAN MAY BE GETTING SOME ASSISTANCE FROM PAKISTANI MILITARY ADVISERS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS BY NO MEANS PROVEN.
SIMONS

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNCLASSIFIED