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ACTION SA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	ACQ-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	INL-01	OASY-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-01	OIGO-01
	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-01	MCO-01
	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	FMP-00	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00	/034W		

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O 021122Z JAN 97
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4036
 INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY RIYADH
 USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
 AMEMBASSY ALMATY
 USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA J5//
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
 DIA WASHDC
 AMEMBASSY ANKARA
 AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
 USMISSION USVIENNA
 AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 AMEMBASSY ROME
 AMCONSUL JEDDAH

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AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000025

DEPT FOR SA/PAB AND EUR/CEN; USVIENNA FOR US DEL OSCE; LONDON FOR POL/TUELLER; PARIS FOR POL/RAVELING; ROME FOR POL/DEMPSEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/2/07

TAGS: PGOV, KISL, PINR, AF

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: TALIBAN SHIFT YAR MOHAMMAD FROM HERAT TO GHAZNI

REFS: (A) FBIS 241744Z DEC 96 (NOTAL)

- (B) 96 ISLAMABAD 10672

- (C) FBIS 211634Z DEC 96

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY DCM JOHN HOLZMAN. REASON: 1.5 (C) (D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: AFGHAN EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY WAHAB TOLD POLOFF JAN. 1 THAT THE TALIBAN HAS SHIFTED YAR MOHAMMAD FROM THE HERAT TO THE GHAZNI GOVERNORSHIP. TALIBAN SUPPORTER [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF JAN. 2 THAT THE MOVE MIGHT BE AN ATTEMPT BY THE TALIBAN TO PREVENT MOHAMMAD FROM DEVELOPING AN INDEPENDENT POWER BASE IN HERAT. HE ADDED THAT MOHAMMAD MAY NOT ACCEPT THE TALIBAN'S ORDER. OTHER OBSERVERS REMARKED THAT THE TALIBAN MAY WANT MOHAMMAD TO DEAL WITH GROWING TENSIONS IN GHAZNI BETWEEN PASHTUNS AND HAZARAS. END SUMMARY.

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OMAR ORDERS MOHAMMAD TO GHAZNI

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3. (C) IN A JANUARY 1 MEETING WITH POLOFF, AFGHAN EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY ABDUL WAHAB CONFIRMED THAT TALIBAN LEADER MULLAH OMAR HAS SHIFTED YAR MOHAMMAD FROM HIS CURRENT POSITION AS GOVERNOR OF HERAT AND APPOINTED HIM GOVERNOR OF GHAZNI PROVINCE (REF A). ACCORDING TO WAHAB, COMMANDER ABDUL RAZAQ, A FORMER DEPUTY TO SLAIN TALIBAN COMMANDER MULLAH BORJAN, HAS BEEN APPOINTED THE NEW GOVERNOR OF HERAT. HE NOTED THAT MOHAMMAD, A FORMER RESISTANCE COMMANDER WHO HAD BEEN HERAT GOVERNOR SINCE THE CITY FELL TO THE TALIBAN IN

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SEPTEMBER 1995, HAS NOT TAKEN UP HIS NEW POST YET, ALTHOUGH HE IS EXPECTED TO DO SO SOON.

4. (C) ASKED FOR THE REASON FOR THE SHIFT, WAHAB SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND REPLIED "AMIR OMAR DOES NOT LIKE ONE MAN TO STAY IN ONE POSITION FOR TOO LONG A TIME." HE ADDED THAT MOVING FROM HERAT TO GHAZNI SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A DEMOTION FOR MOHAMMAD BECAUSE "GHAZNI IS A LARGE PROVINCE IN A STRATEGIC AREA." POLOFF THEN ASKED WHETHER MOHAMMAD WOULD BE BRINGING HIS NUMEROUS POPALZAI TRIBAL FIGHTERS WITH HIM FROM HERAT TO GHAZNI. WAHAB, WHO FOUGHT WITH MOHAMMED DURING THE JIHAD AS A MEMBER OF THE HEZB-I-ISLAMI (KHALIS) FACTION, RESPONDED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THESE FORCES WOULD REMAIN DEPLOYED IN HERAT.

[REDACTED] "HE MAY NOT GO"

5. (C) IN A CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF ON JANUARY 2, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] THOUGHT THAT THE MOVE OF MOHAMMAD FROM HERAT TO GHAZNI WAS SIGNIFICANT AND PROBABLY INDICATED THE TALIBAN
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LEADERSHIP'S DESIRE TO CIRCUMVENT MOHAMMAD'S EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT POWER BASE IN HERAT. NOTING REPORTS THAT MOHAMMAD HAD BEGUN DEMANDING SPECIAL "VISAS" FOR VISITS TO HERAT BY FOREIGNERS, HE OBSERVED THAT MOHAMMAD HAD PROBABLY ANNOYED "HIGH-LEVEL TALIBAN," INCLUDING MULLAH OMAR, WHO THOUGHT HE WAS UNWILLING TO RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF THE TALIBAN INNER SHURA. [REDACTED] REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NOT SURE THAT MOHAMMAD WOULD LISTEN TO THE ORDER FROM KANDAHAR TO LEAVE HERAT -- "HE MAY NOT GO. THEY HAVE TRIED TO MOVE HIM FROM HERAT BEFORE AND FAILED."

EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH MINORITY GROUPS

6. (C) HEZB-I-WAHDAT (KHALILI) ISLAMABAD REPRESENTATIVE DR. TALEB TOLD POLOFF JANUARY 1 THAT HE THOUGHT THAT YAR MOHAMMAD IS BEING MOVED TO GHAZNI BECAUSE "HE HAS EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH MINORITY GROUPS IN HERAT, AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH TENSIONS BETWEEN PASHTUNS AND HARARAS IN GHAZNI." (NOTE: A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE HERAT POPULATION IS QIZILBASH AND HAZARA SHIA, AND TAJIK; GHAZNI

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PROBABLY CONTAINS AT LEAST A PLURALITY OF HAZARAS, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS--REF B.) SIMULTANEOUSLY, TALEB ADDED, ABDUL RAZAQ IS KNOWN FOR HIS MILITARY PROWESS AND IS PROBABLY CONSIDERED BY THE TALIBAN TO BE AN EFFECTIVE COMMANDER FOR ITS FORCES IN THE BADGHIS

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USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
AMEMBASSY ALMATY
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA J5//
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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SECTOR (OF WESTERN AFGHANISTAN). ASKED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN
GHAZNI AND BAMIAN PROVINCES, HE REPLIED THAT KHALILI'S FORCES ARE
UNDER PRESSURE FROM TALIBAN AND HEZB-I-WAHDAT (AKBARI) ATTACKS, BUT
SO FAR MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA ARE SMALL-SCALE (REF C).

(NOTE: THE TALIBAN AND AKBARI ATTACKS DO NOT APPEAR TO BE
COORDINATED; AKBARI IS KNOWN TO BE A CLOSE SUPPORTER OF JAMIAT-I-
ISLAMI COMMANDER MASOOD.)

COMMENT

7. (C) WITH A TRIBAL ARMY (REPORTEDLY) SEVERAL THOUSAND STRONG,
YAR MOHAMMAD HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED AN IMPORTANT COMMANDER FOR
THE TALIBAN AND THEY WILL PROBABLY TRY TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT NOT TO
ALIENATE HIM. BASED ON DR. TALEB'S COMMENTS, POSITIONING HIM IN
GHAZNI SEEMS TO MAKE SENSE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER

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MOHAMMAD WILL TAKE THE JOB IF HE CONSIDERS IT A STEP DOWN FROM
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HERAT.
SIMONS

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