

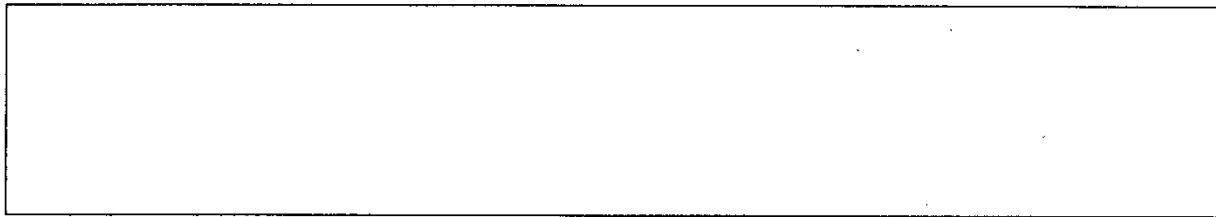
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01/15/96 (2/16)

DOCUMENT_ID: 168281600
INQNO: DOC400 00175110
DOCNO: TEL 254682 96
PRODUCER: WASHDC
SOURCE: STATE
DOCTYPE: OUT
DOR: 19961213
TOR: 142024
DOCPREC: P
ORIGDATE: 199612131915
MHFNO: 96 6323924
DOCCLASS: C

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C 99616STATE 2546823481921ZSCP 96-6323924 MIDB
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0000
INFO RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0000
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0000
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RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0000
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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 0000
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0000
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0000
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CONTROLS
C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 254682

LONDON FOR TUELLER, PARIS FOR RAVELING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/06

TEXT

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, UN, PK, RS, IR, AF
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: TALIBAN REP WON'T SEEK UN SEAT
FOR NOW

ROME FOR DEMPSEY

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY ROBIN L. RAPHEL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, STATE. REASON: 1.5(D).

2. (C) SUMMARY:

TOLD A/S RAPHEL THAT HE KNOWS THE TALIBAN
FACE MAJOR OBSTACLES IN GAINING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

IN ORDER TO MODERATE TALIBAN POLICIES, HE SAID THE
U.S. SHOULD BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED, PRESSURE
PAKISTAN TO SUPPORT THE TALIBAN MODERATES, AND ENCOURAGE
THE TALL BAN TO REACH OUT TO PASHTUN TRIBAL LEADERS AND THE
EDUCATED AND BRING THEM INTO THE TALL BAN ADMINISTRATION IN
KABUL AND ELSEWHERE. HE DESCRIBED PAKISTANI SUPPORT FOR
THE TALIBAN AND TALIBAN INTERNAL DIVISIONS BETWEEN JIHADI
FIGHTERS, THOSE WHO WENT TO PAKISTANI RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND
A SMALL BUT DANGEROUS ELEMENT OF FORMER KHALQIS WHO ARE
ANTI-U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. (C)

MADE A TWO-HOUR CALL ON A/S RAPHEL ON DECEMBER
10 SA/PAB DIRECTOR COLDREN
AND AFGHAN DESKOFF CHEW (NOTETAKER) WERE PRESENT.

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AWARE OF INTERNATIONAL ANTI-TALIBAN SENTIMENT

3. (C) RAPHEL DESCRIBED THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION AGAINST THE TALIBAN GIVEN ITS GENDER POLICIES, HARASSMENT OF UN/NGO AGENCIES IN KABUL, DETENTION AND ARREST OF PANJSHIRIS, INCLUDING AID AGENCIES' LOCAL EMPLOYEES, FORCED ENTRY INTO EXPAT HOUSES AND OFFICES, AND CONFISCATION OF PRIVATE VEHICLES. _____ ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THE STRONG INTERNATIONAL TIDE AGAINST THE TALIBAN.

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HE NOTED SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS OF TALIBAN RULE: THERE WAS MORE SECURITY NOW IN KABUL AND ELSEWHERE AND THERE IS A STRUCTURE COMPOSED OF MULLAH OMAR, COMMANDERS AND GOVERNORS. A SIMPLE ADMINISTRATION WAS IN PLACE, ALTHOUGH NO BUREAUCRACY. _____ SAID THAT OFFICIALS OPERATED ON AN ORAL RATHER THAN WRITTEN "CODE."

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4. (C) RAPHEL SAID THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH TO CONSTITUTE A GOVERNMENT. THE PROBLEM FOR THE NGOS IS THAT THEY HAVE NO CONSISTENT AND RESPONSIBLE TALL BAN CONTACTS WITH WHOM THEY CAN DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS. THEIR CONTACTS KEEP CHANGING, AS DO MINISTERS AND PORTFOLIOS. SHE WARNED THAT THERE WAS A REAL DANGER IF THE TALIBAN ARE NOT MORE COOPERATIVE, THE NGOS WOULD PULL OUT OF AFGHANISTAN ALTOGETHER. _____ SUCH AN ACTION WOULD HURT THE NEEDIEST OF THE AFGHANS.

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INDICATED THE EUROPEANS WERE NOT SO IMPORTANT TO THE AFGHAN EQUATION. RAPHEL AND COLDREN EXPLAINED THE EUROPEANS ARE IN FACT VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY CONTRIBUTE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, OPERATE ON THE GROUND, AND CAN INFLUENCE FOREIGN POLICY AND PUBLIC OPINION. LATER IN A SEPARATE MEETING, COLDREN REITERATED USG CONCERNS ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN KABUL AND THAT WOMEN NOT WORKING COULD LEAD TO STARVATION FOR FAMILIES. THE UPCOMING UNOCHA AID CONFERENCE IN ASHGABAT IN MID-JANUARY WOULD BE PIVOTAL. SOME EUROPEANS, _____ ARE ANTI-TALIBAN AND ARE LIKELY TO MAKE THE CONFERENCE MORE POLITICAL THAN WE WOULD WANT. INDIA AND RUSSIA WOULD BE ATTENDING.

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MORE DIRECT USG INVOLVEMENT NEEDED TO MODERATE TALL BAN

5. (C) RAPHEL SAID THE U.S. IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION AMONG THE MAJOR PLAYERS (RUSSIA, PAKISTAN, AND IRAN). WE GIVE NOONE ANY ASSISTANCE, WE ARE WORKING HARD TO UNDERSTAND EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND WE MEET WITH ALL THE AFGHAN GROUPS. _____ SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO AVOID HAVING THE TALIBAN AND HENCE AFGHANISTAN BECOME ISOLATED IN THE WORLD. HE THEN WARNED TO HIS MAIN POINTS: IF THE U.S. TRULY WANTS

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TO MODERATE THE TALIBAN AND ITS POLICIES, THEN THE U.S. MUST BECOME MORE ACTIVELY AND DIRECTLY ENGAGED IN AFGHANISTAN. THE AFGHAN PEOPLE MUST KNOW THAT THE USG STANDS FOR AND BEHIND MODERATES WHO WANT TO COME TO THE FORE. COLDREN SAID THAT VARIOUS AFGHAN GROUPS HAVE COME TO US TO SAY THAT THEY ARE THE MODERATES AND THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT THEM. HOWEVER, THE U.S. HAS NEITHER FUNDS NOR THE INCLINATION TO BACK ANY GROUP. THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT ITS INFLUENCE TO DISTORT THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN.

ARGUED THAT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE WANT USG INFLUENCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT; THEY DO NOT WANT IRANIAN, PAKISTANI, OR RUSSIAN INFLUENCE OR MONEY BUT THIS IS WHAT IS BEING FOISTED UPON THEM. RAPHEL RESPONDED THAT THE USG WANTED TO AVOID GIVING SIGNALS OF A DEEPER ENGAGEMENT THAN COULD BE SUSTAINED.

TALIBAN INTERNAL DIVISIONS

6. (C) RAPHEL ASKED [REDACTED] TO COMMENT ON ONE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL TALIBAN DYNAMICS THAT WE HAD HEARD. ACCORDING TO THIS VIEW, THERE WERE THREE MAJOR TALIBAN ELEMENTS: 1) THE PASHTUN CHAUVINISTS WHO BELIEVE THAT ALL OF AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE UNDER PASHTUN RULE, A VIEW FOR WHICH THEY ARE

PREPARED TO FIGHT; 2) THE RELIGIOUS ONES WHO BELIEVE THAT ALLAH WILL DELIVER THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO THEM ONE WAY OR ANOTHER; AND 3) THE MODERATES WHO UNDERSTAND THE TALIBAN NEEDS TO REACH OUT TO THE OTHER ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND WHO SUPPORT A NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

OFFERED HIS OWN VIEW ON THE TALIBAN, WHICH HE SAW AS DIVIDED IN A DIFFERENT WAY. HE BASICALLY DIVIDED THE MEMBERS INTO TWO MAJOR GROUPS: 1) THE MUJAHIDEEN WHO HAD FOUGHT DURING THE SOVIET OCCUPATION AND WERE MORE WORLDLY AND HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO OTHER GROUPS AND IDEAS; AND 2) THOSE WHO ATTENDED PAKISTANI RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND WHO HAD STRONG TIES EITHER TO GOP ELEMENTS SUCH AS ISI OR TO PAKISTAN'S RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

7. (C) [REDACTED] SAID IT IS THIS LATTER GROUP WITH PAKISTANI TIES WHO HAVE THE MOST INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND ON SUPREME TALIBAN LEADER MULLAH MOHAMMED OMAR. THE FIGHTERS ARE THE ONES STILL ON THE FRONTLINES TODAY, BUT THEY HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE ON TALIBAN POLICIES. ALSO DESCRIBED A SMALL GROUP OF ABOUT 100 FORMER AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS OF THE KHALQI ("MASSES") WING OF THE AFGHAN COMMUNIST PARTY WHO WERE VERY DANGEROUS AND ANTI-U.S. HE CLAIMED THAT THE KHALQIS WERE THE ONES WHO STORMED THE UN COMPOUND, TOOK FORMER PRESIDENT NAJIBULLAH TO AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION AND EXECUTED HIM. LATER, IT WAS MULLAH RABBANI WHO DECIDED THAT THE CORPSE SHOULD BE HUNG IN THE STREET, WHICH SAID WAS A VERY UNFORTUNATE DECISION FOR MULLAH RABBANI, WHO IS ACTUALLY A MODERATE. THE KHALQIS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HARASSMENT OF FOREIGNERS/NGOS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL ACTS IN KABUL. RAPHEL STRESSED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO GET SOMEONE WITH AUTHORITY IN CONTROL IN KABUL.

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GETTING THE TALIBAN TO REACH OUT TO TRIBALS AND THE EDUCATED

8. (C) [] ACKNOWLEDGED THESE PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. SHOULD HELP PERSUADE THE TALIBAN TO BROADEN OUT AND INCORPORATE TRIBAL LEADERS AND EDUCATED AFGHANS INTO THEIR DELIBERATIVE BODIES. [] OPINED THAT ONLY BY BRINGING AFGHANS WITH MORE MODERATE VIEWS INTO THE TALIBAN ADMINISTRATION CAN THERE BE ANY HOPE OF SOFTENING THEIR VIEWS. RAPHEL SAID THAT WE WOULD UNDERSCORE THAT POINT IN OUR ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH TALIBAN OFFICIALS. RAPHEL STRESSED THAT SECURITY ALONE FOR KABUL WAS NOT ENOUGH; THE TALIBAN NEEDS TO WORK TOWARDS BUILDING A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. [] POINT WAS THAT THEY NEEDED TO START WITH MORE INFLUENTIAL PASHTUNS FIRST. IN SUBSEQUENT

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DISCUSSION, [] AFFIRMED THAT THE TRIBES HAD APPROACHED THE TALIBAN LEADERSHIP AND OFFERED FIGHTERS, BUT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT THE TALIBAN MODERATE THEIR POLICIES ON WOMEN AND EDUCATION.

THE VIABILITY OF THE TALIBAN

9. (C) RAPHEL ASKED WHY []

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[] RESPONDED SIMPLY, "BECAUSE THEY CONTROL TWO-THIRDS OF THE COUNTRY." DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY GET PAKISTANI BACKING, HE NEVERTHELESS SAW THE TALIBAN AS INTRINSICALLY AFGHAN AND AS A FORCE THAT CANNOT BE ASSUMED WILL GO AWAY. WHEN ASKED WHY THE RANK AND FILE GO ALONG WITH TALIBAN POLICIES, HE SAID THAT MOST OF THE TALIBAN REALLY ARE VERY SIMPLE, UNSOPHISTICATED PEOPLE. THEY ARE TOTALLY UNAWARE OF THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF TALIBAN POLICIES. THEY DON'T HAVE THE WORLDLINESS OR INCLINATION TO COUNTER THESE POLICIES.

PAKISTANI SUPPORT FOR THE TALIBAN

10. (C) RAPHEL ASKED [] TO ELABORATE ON PAKISTANI SUPPORT FOR THE TALIBAN. HE SAID IT WAS EXTENSIVE AND LARGELY PROVIDED BY ISI. [] SAID HE HAD SPOKEN WITH MFA OFFICIALS "WHO KNEW LITTLE ABOUT AFGHANISTAN" AND ISI OFFICIALS. [] THE MFA GOT INVOLVED TO THE EXTENT THAT IT ACTUALLY DRAFTED LETTERS FOR THE TALIBAN. IN CONTRAST, ISI OFFICIALS WERE WELL INFORMED. PAKISTANI SUPPORT RANGED FROM CASH TO SUPPLIES TO LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ON THE GROUND MILITARY/INTEL ADVISERS. THERE WERE NO PAKISTANIS ACTUALLY WORKING IN AFGHAN MINISTRIES. HE SAID THERE WERE TWO SORTS OF PAKISTANI "SOLDIERS" IN AFGHANISTAN: EDUCATED ARMY OFFICERS WITH THE ISI AND UNEDUCATED RECRUITS FROM RURAL AREAS. [] SAID THAT HE AND OTHER AFGHANS DO NOT WANT TO BE DOMINATED BY THE PAKISTANIS. THEY SHOULD LET THE AFGHANS HANDLE MATTERS FOR THEMSELVES.

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THE KING SHOULD RETURN AND TEST THE WATERS

11. (C) RAPHEL ASKED WHERE THINGS STOOD WITH THE KING AND WHETHER HE WAS A VIABLE OPTION. SHE REITERATED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GIVE THE KING FINANCIAL SUPPORT OR A U.S. IMPRIMATUR. IF HE WANTS TO HELP HIS COUNTRY, HOWEVER, HE SHOULD RETURN TO HIS HOMELAND AND TEST THE WATERS WHILE HE STILL HAS THE OPPORTUNITY. SAID THE KING NEEDS TO HAVE MORE INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES THAN HE DOES PRESENTLY. ZAHIR SHAH ALSO FEARS THAT IRAN MIGHT TRY TO PREVENT HIS RETURN. RAPHEL SAID HE DID RUN THIS RISK, BUT IT WAS UP TO HIM TO DECIDE WHETHER HE WANTED TO FACE THE RISK AND TEST THE WATERS TO SEE IF HE COULD SERVE AS A TRANSITIONAL FIGURE. HE COULD GO TO A NON-PASHTUN AREA LIKE MAZAR-I-SHARI F. THOUGHT MAZAR WAS A GOOD FIRST DESTINATION; THE KING NEEDS TO REASSURE NON-PASHTUNS THAT HE IS NOT AGAINST THEM. OFFERED TO CONTACT ABDUL WALL ABOUT MAKING A VISIT TO THE U.S. RAPHEL SAID SHE WOULD BE HAPPY TO EXPLAIN USG POLICY TO GEN. ABDUL WALI SHOULD HE DECIDE TO VISIT THE U.S. WE SEE ALL THE OTHER FACTIONS; WE WILL SEE THE KING'S REPRESENTATIVES.

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13. (C) COMMENT: WE RECENTLY HAVE RECEIVED MORE CREDIBLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXTENT AND ORIGIN OF PAKISTANI ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO THE TALIBAN. ACCOUNT IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHERS WE HAVE HEARD.

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CHRISTOPHER

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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