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ACTION SA-01

INFO	LOG-00	INLB-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-01	OASY-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	EAP-01	EUR-01	OIGO-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00
	CIO-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	FMP-00	SNIS-00
	NISC-00	PMB-00	PRME-01	PRMC-01	DRL-09	G-00	/024W

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O 080914Z OCT 96
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2396
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
AMEMBASSY ALMATY
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY RIYADH
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME
USIA WASHDC 5936
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN S BLODGETT
DATE/CASE ID: 16 NOV 2005 200504096

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DIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 008520

DEPT FOR SA/PAB, NEA/NGA, AND EUR/CEN; LONDON FOR POL - TUELLER;
PARIS FOR POL - RAVELING; ROME FOR POL - NDEMPSEY; DHAKA FOR
SA/PAB DIRECTOR COLDREN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/06

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, AF

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: TALIBAN SEEKS LOW PROFILE RELATIONS WITH
THE USG - AT LEAST FOR NOW

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

2. (S) DURING AN OCTOBER 7 MEETING AT THE DCM RESIDENCE,
SELF-DESCRIBED "NUMBER TWO FOR THE TALIBAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,"
ABDUL JALIL, DELIVERED A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM TALIBAN LEADER
MAULVI OMAR ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

THE TALIBAN THINK HIGHLY OF THE U.S., APPRECIATE U.S. HELP
DURING THE JIHAD AGAINST THE SOVIETS, AND WANT GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THE U.S. BUT THEY ALSO WANT THE U.S. TO BE AWARE THAT
IRAN, HEKMATYAR, RABBANI AND MASOOD ARE ACCUSING THE TALIBAN OF
BEING AN ANTI-SHIA TOOL OF THE U.S. -- PAID AND DIRECTED BY THE
USG. THESE ACCUSATIONS ARE STARTING TO RESONATE IN AFGHANISTAN,
ESPECIALLY AMONG THE HAZARAS (AFGHAN SHIAS). AS A RESULT, THE
TALIBAN WANT CONTACTS WITH THE U.S. TO BE QUIET AND LOW KEY;

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BEFORE PUBLICLY "OPENING RELATIONS" WITH THE U.S., THE TALIBAN
WANT FIRST TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH ISLAMIC COUNTRIES SUCH AS
SAUDI ARABIA AND UAE.

3. (C) EXPLAINING OMAR'S MESSAGE FURTHER, JALIL SAID INFORMAL
CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TALIBAN AND USG REPRESENTATIVES, SUCH AS
MEETINGS AT THE DCM'S RESIDENCE OR UNPUBLICIZED CONTACTS INSIDE
AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE. JALIL ADDED THAT MAULVI GHAUS,
WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS THE "NUMBER ONE" PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MIGHT BE COMING TO ISLAMABAD "AFTER SOME TIME"

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AND COULD MEET WITH EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES AT THAT TIME.

4. (C) TAKING THIS MESSAGE ON BOARD, THE DCM ASKED THAT JALIL CONVEY THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO MAULVI OMAR:

-- THE U.S. WANTS TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE TALIBAN AND WORK WITH THEM, JUST AS WE HAVE WITH THE OTHER FACTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN; THERE IS NO NEED FOR EITHER SIDE TO RUSH FORWARD IN THIS RELATIONSHIP;

-- THE TALIBAN MUST REACH OUT TO ALL AFGHAN RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC GROUPS TO BUILD A BROADLY-REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THE ONLY KIND OF GOVERNMENT THAT CAN BRING LASTING PEACE AND STABILITY TO AFGHANISTAN;

-- THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT TALIBAN VIEWS REGARDING ISSUES OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US, SUCH AS THE NEED FOR DUE PROCESS AND RESPECT OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY RELATING TO WOMEN;

-- THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD RECOGNIZE AFGHANISTAN'S GREAT NEEDS FOR RECONSTRUCTION AFTER NEARLY TWO DECADES OF WAR, BUT SUCH ASSISTANCE MAY NOT BE FORTHCOMING UNLESS THE TALIBAN TREATS ALL AFGHANS, INCLUDING WOMEN, EQUALLY;

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-- THE U.S. URGES THE TALIBAN IMMEDIATELY TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH BOTH DOSTAM AND MASOOD -- EXPANSION OF FIGHTING IN THE NORTH WILL ADD TO THE ANXIETIES OF AFGHANISTAN'S NORTHERN NEIGHBORS AND COULD PRECIPITATE AN INTERVENTION BY RUSSIA AND SOME OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS, A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD NOT BE IN THE TALIBAN'S OR AFGHANISTAN'S BEST INTERESTS.

5. (C) RESPONDING TO THE DCM'S POINTS, JALIL EXPLAINED THAT THE TALIBAN HAVE "NO PROBLEM" WITH EITHER DOSTAM OR THE TAJIKS -- THEIR PROBLEM IS WITH MASOOD, WHO CANNOT BE TRUSTED. FOR EXAMPLE, JALIL RECALLED, MASOOD HAD EVEN ACCEPTED SUPPORT FROM THE RUSSIANS IN 1982 WHEN THE JIHAD WAS IN FULL SWING. JALIL CLAIMED MORE TAJIKS ARE WITH THE TALIBAN THAN WITH MASOOD, AND MASOOD WOULD HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH. JALIL CONTINUED THAT DOSTAM WOULD NEED TO DISARM HIS FORCES AS PART OF A DEAL WITH THE TALIBAN; THE TALIBAN, HOWEVER, WERE NOT PLANNING TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE HAZARAS AT THIS TIME. RESPONDING TO THE DCM'S POINT ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS, JALIL MERELY UTTERED A POLITE "YES, THANK

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YOU."

6. (C) BIOGRAPHIC NOTE: JALIL, WHO SPEAKS HALTING, BUT PASSABLE ENGLISH, MAKES A GOOD IMPRESSION: HE IS THOUGHTFUL AND CONSIDERED IN HIS REMARKS AND VERY POLITE. HE RECOUNTED THAT HE

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HAD LEARNED HIS ENGLISH IN AN ICRC HOSPITAL IN PESHAWAR IN 1981,
WHEN HE WAS RECEIVING TREATMENT FROM A LEG WOUND SUFFERED IN THE
JIHAD. HE SAID THAT ONLY BY LEARNING ENGLISH COULD HE ENSURE
HIMSELF AND HIS COMRADES ADEQUATE CARE FROM THE FOREIGN
DOCTORS. JALIL MADE A POINT OF IDENTIFYING HIS ROLE AS MULLAH
GHAUS'S DEPUTY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EVEN THOUGH THE TALIBAN HAVE
NOT YET FORMED MINISTRIES OR NAMED MINISTERS. HE THEN ASSERTED
THAT SHER MOHAMMED STANAKZAI IS ONLY GHAUS'S "HELPER" BECAUSE HE
SPEAKS ENGLISH AND IS NOT THE NUMBER TWO ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AS
UNSMIA HEAD DR. HOLL HAD BEEN TOLD EARLIER; JALIL DECLARED THAT
STANAKZAI IS THE DEPUTY FOR RECONSTRUCTION. ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT
DISCOMFITED BY THE PRESENCE OF A WOMAN EMBASSY OFFICER (THE
REFUGEE COUNSELOR) BEFORE HE AND THE DCM MET IN A CLOSED
SESSION, JALIL NONETHELESS SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD THE DCM PRIVATELY

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THAT THE TALIBAN WOULD NEED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THIS OFFICER TO
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ADDRESS AFGHANISTAN'S SERIOUS REFUGEE PROBLEMS.

7. (C) COMMENT: BEFORE CONVEYING HIS POINTS, JALIL ASKED THAT THE OTHERS LEAVE THE ROOM, APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE WAS SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF MAULVI OMAR. OMAR'S MESSAGE SUGGESTS THAT THE TALIBAN MAY BE MORE POLITICALLY SOPHISTICATED THAN GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. WE WILL, OF COURSE, PUT THE DCM'S PROPOSED TRIP TO AFGHANISTAN ON HOLD FOR THE TIME BEING. MEANWHILE, WE WILL CONTINUE ONGOING INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THE TALIBAN, INCLUDING WORKING LEVEL VISITS TO AFGHANISTAN DEALING WITH SUCH ISSUES AS REFUGEES AND NARCOTICS. SIMONS

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