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Current Handling: n/a  
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Case Number: 200104094

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PTQ0632

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.5(B), 1.5(D)

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ACTION SA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AF-01	ACQ-01	CIAE-00
	SMEC-00	INL-01	OASY-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EAP-01
	EUR-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
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SCT-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	FMP-00	SNIS-00
	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00	/033W

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O 071243Z JUL 97  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8324  
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
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AMCONSUL LAHORE  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
DIA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD  
DATE/CASE ID: 27 JUN 2003 200104094

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
AMEMBASSY ALMATY  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 005710

DEPT FOR SA/PAB, NEA/NGA, AND EUR/CEN; LONDON FOR POL/TUELLER;  
CENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/7/07  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, MOPS, KISL, AF, IR  
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: OBSERVERS REPORT UPTICK IN SUPPORT FOR  
ANTI-TALIBAN FACTIONS BY IRAN

REFS: (A) ISLAMABAD 5212; (B) ISLAMABAD 2001

(U) CLASSIFIED BY DAN MOZENA, ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR. REASON:  
1.5 (C) (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: OBSERVERS REPORT AN UPTICK IN IRANIAN MILITARY  
AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-TALIBAN FACTIONS IN THE PAST  
SEVERAL WEEKS.

B1

BELIEVE IRAN'S ACTIONS ARE A DEFENSIVE REACTION TO THE  
TALIBAN'S EFFORTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE NORTH. PAKISTANI  
INTERLOCUTORS DISAGREE, SEEING IRANIAN ACTIVITIES AS INHERENTLY  
AGGRESSIVE. OBSERVERS AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT IRAN'S ACTIVITIES ARE  
MOTIVATED IN PART BY ANTI-U.S. VIEWS, AND THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY  
GUARDS AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ARE PLAYING KEY ROLES IN SETTING  
POLICY. END SUMMARY.

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UPTICK IN MILITARY SUPPORT

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2. (C) OBSERVERS OF THE AFGHAN SCENE HAVE NOTICED AN UPTICK IN IRANIAN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-TALIBAN FACTIONS IN THE NORTH SINCE THE OUSTER OF GENERAL DOSTAM, THE FORMER NATIONAL ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (NIMA) LEADER, IN LATE MAY. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF ON JULY 5 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE IRANIANS HAVE INCREASED THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS FLYING BETWEEN IRANIAN AND AFGHAN POINTS IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. WHILE NOTING THAT SOME OF THESE FLIGHTS PROBABLY ARE CARRYING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ITEMS, SUCH AS FOOD, [REDACTED] MOST OF THE FLIGHTS ARE TRANSPORTING MILITARY ITEMS, INCLUDING SMALL ARMS, AMMUNITION, AND EXPLOSIVES. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH POLOFF, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HAVE OBSERVED VARIOUS IRANIAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT PARKED AT MAZAR-I-SHARIF AND BAMIYAN AIRPORTS IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. [REDACTED]

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3. (C) OBSERVERS ADD THAT THEY BELIEVE IRAN HAS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF "DIPLOMATS" IT HAS STATIONED AT ITS MAZAR-I-SHARIF AND BAMIYAN CONSULATES. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE WERE OVER FIFTY IRANIANS WORKING AT THE CONSULATE. IN PREVIOUS TRIPS, HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE WERE ONLY TWENTY. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF THAT IN A MID-JUNE VISIT TO BAMIYAN HE HEARD THAT THERE WERE MANY IRANIANS LIVING IN THE TOWN, SOME OF WHOM WERE INVOLVED IN HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS MEDICINE AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION. HE HEARD, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE OVER TWENTY IRANIANS WORKING IN THE CONSULATE. [REDACTED] SAID HE WAS TOLD BY [REDACTED] THAT SOME OF THESE IRANIANS ARE

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REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS.

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A "REDOUBLING" OF EFFORTS

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4. (C) POLOFF ASKED [REDACTED] WHAT HE THINKS  
THESE VARIOUS REPORTS MIGHT MEAN. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] COMMENTED THAT IRANIAN DIPLOMATS IN  
ISLAMABAD HAVE TOLD HIM IN RECENT MEETINGS THAT IRAN IS  
"REDOUBLING" ITS EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN. ASKED WHAT THAT MEANT, HE  
REPLIED THAT IRAN HAD MADE A DECISION TO INCREASE ITS SUPPORT TO  
THE ANTI-TALIBAN FACTIONS TO BUTTRESS THEM AGAINST FUTURE ATTACKS  
FROM THE TALIBAN. [REDACTED]

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SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	FMP-00	SNIS-00
NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00	/033W
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 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8325  
 INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
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5. (C) ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, [REDACTED] OBSERVED, IRAN CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS TO CONVINCe THE FACTIONS TO FORM A NEW "GOVERNMENT" TO COUNTER THE TALIBAN "GOVERNMENT" IN KABUL. THE POINT MAN FOR THESE EFFORTS IS DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BORUJERDI, WHO HAS REPORTEDLY VISITED MAZAR-I-SHARIF AND BAMIYAN SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS. FOREIGN MINISTER VELAYATI HAS ALSO MET WITH A NUMBER OF ANTI-TALIBAN LEADERS RECENTLY, INCLUDING HEZB-I-ISLAMI LEADER GULBUDDIN HEKMATYAR AND FORMER PRESIDENT BURHANUDDIN RABBANI.

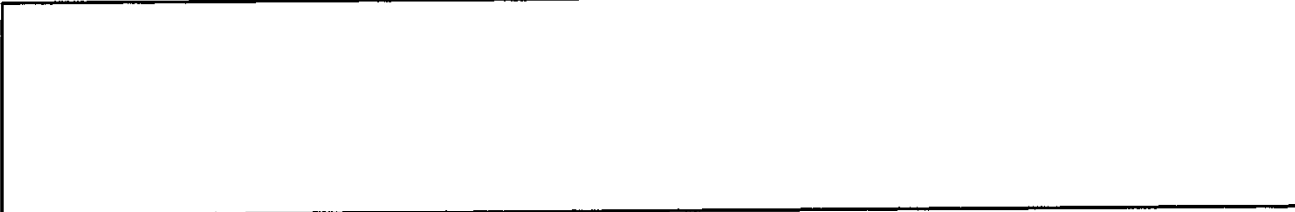
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IRANIAN CONDUCT SEEN AS DEFENSIVE BY SOME...  
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6. (C) [REDACTED] CHARACTERIZED THE ENHANCED IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AS "DEFENSIVE" IN NATURE -- "THE IRANIANS WERE GIVEN A FRIGHT WHEN THE TALIBAN ENTERED MAZAR-I-SHARIF IN LATE MAY AND THOUGHT THEY WERE LOSING THEIR STAKE IN AFGHANISTAN. ALTHOUGH THE TALIBAN HAVE BEEN PUSHED BACK, IRAN IS INTENT THAT ITS ALLIES NOT BE PLACED IN A SIMILAR POSITION AGAIN." IN A JULY 4 CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF, [REDACTED] AGREED WITH THIS ANALYSIS, ASSERTING THAT "IRAN IS ANGERED BY PAKISTAN'S SUPPORT FOR THE TALIBAN AND WILL NOT ALLOW ITS ALLIES TO BE DEFEATED WITHOUT A FIGHT." [REDACTED]



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AGGRESSIVE BY OTHERS

7. (C)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] SAW IRANIAN BEHAVIOR IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. [REDACTED]  
SAID HE FELT THAT IRANIAN POLICY OBJECTIVES IN AFGHANISTAN ARE  
LONG-TERM AND BASICALLY INVOLVE ENHANCING IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN  
AFGHANISTAN VIS-A-VIS PAKISTAN AND THE U.S. -- "WITH THE DEFEAT OF  
THE TALIBAN AT MAZAR-I-SHARIF, THE IRANIANS ARE REACTING TO A  
TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY WHICH THEY FEEL WILL ALLOW IRAN TO BECOME  
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DOMINANT IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN." [REDACTED]  
AGREE WITH [REDACTED] VIEWS, AND, [REDACTED]  
EMBOFFS, [REDACTED] STRESSED WHAT THEY SEE AS IRAN'S AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS  
IN AFGHANISTAN. FOR EXAMPLE, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THAT IRAN  
WANTS "TO BUILD A LAND BRIDGE" FROM ITS TERRITORY THROUGH NORTHERN  
AFGHANISTAN TO CONNECT WITH TAJIKISTAN TO CREATE A "GREATER  
PERSIA."

IRANIAN ANTI-AMERICANISM

8. (C) WHILE OBSERVERS DISAGREE WHETHER IRAN'S BEHAVIOR IS  
DEFENSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE IN NATURE, THEY SEEM TO AGREE THAT ONE  
MOTIVATING FACTOR FOR IRAN IS ANTI-AMERICANISM. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
TOLD POLOFF THAT HE HAS ENCOUNTERED A VISCERAL ANTI-AMERICANISM  
AMONG HIS IRANIAN INTERLOCUTORS, WHO ACCUSE THE U.S. OF BEING IN  
LEAGUE WITH PAKISTAN TO SUPPORT THE TALIBAN AGAINST IRAN. A  
SPECIFIC SOURCE OF ANGER FOR IRAN, [REDACTED] IS THEIR BELIEF

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8326  
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY  
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL LAHORE  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
DIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 005710

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ANTI-TALIBAN FACTIONS BY IRAN

THAT THE U.S. IS STRONGLY BACKING THE TALIBAN AS A WAY TO ENSURE  
THAT UNOCAL IS ABLE TO BUILD THE OIL AND GAS PIPELINES CONNECTING  
CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA THROUGH AFGHANISTAN -- "THEY (IRANIANS)  
APPEAR TO BELIEVE THE U.S. WANTS THE PIPELINES BUILT TO UNDERCUT  
IRAN AND ISOLATE IT FROM CENTRAL ASIA."

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WHO MAKES IRANIAN POLICY?  
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9. (C) POLOFF ASKED OBSERVERS WHO THEY THOUGHT SETS POLICY ON  
AFGHANISTAN IN THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT. THE UNIVERSAL ANSWER WAS  
THAT IRAN'S SYSTEM OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING IS SO OPAQUE  
THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL. HOWEVER, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] BELIEVE THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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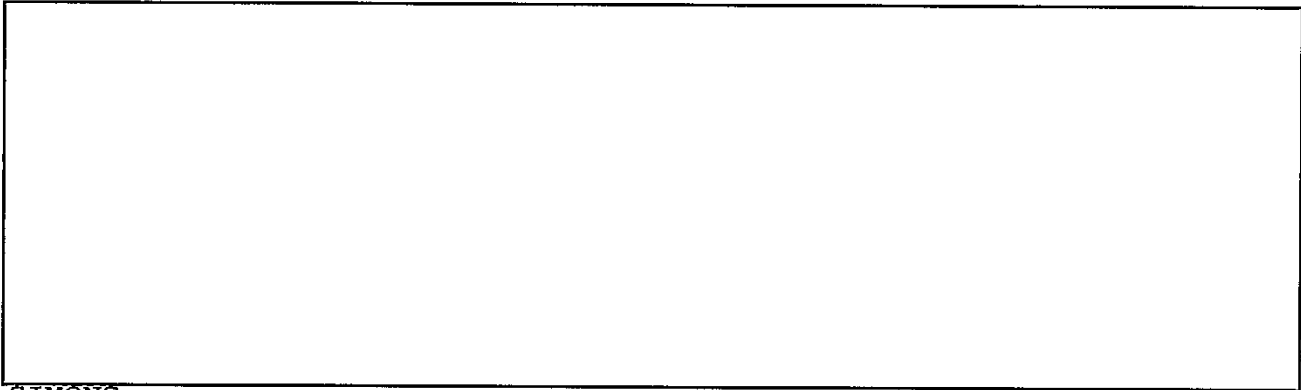
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PLAYS A SECONDARY ROLE IN POLICY FORMULATION IN COMPARISON TO  
IRAN'S OTHER NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES. IN ADDITION, THEY DOUBT  
THAT NEWLY-ELECTED AND PUTATIVE MODERATE PRESIDENT KHATAMI HAS  
EXERCISED MUCH INFLUENCE ON AFGHAN POLICY AS OF YET. [REDACTED]  
AGREED [REDACTED] STATING THAT HE BELIEVES  
THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY, AND THE  
REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS, PLAY KEY ROLES IN POLICY FORMULATION AND  
IMPLEMENTATION. HE ADDED THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ALSO PLAYS  
A KEY ROLE, ESPECIALLY ALONG THE IRANIAN BORDER WITH AFGHANISTAN.  
(NOTE: IRAN CLOSED THE BORDER TO ALL TRAFFIC IN EARLY JUNE. IT  
REPORTEDLY REMAINS CLOSED -- SEE REF A.) IRAN, HE ADDED, HAS  
ESTABLISHED A FORWARD BASE IN MESHED FOR ALL MINISTRIES WORKING ON  
AFGHAN ISSUES.

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COMMENT  
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