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ACTION SA-01

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	INL-01	OASY-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	OS-00	EAP-01
	EB-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	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	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-10	PRME-01	DRL-09
	G-00	/040W					

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-----DE8471 271357Z /38-----  
 O 271304Z AUG 97  
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9562  
 INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
 AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
 USMISSION USVIENNA  
 USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
 AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
 AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE  
 USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
 AMCONSUL PESHAWAR  
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
 AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
 AMEMBASSY ALMATY  
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
 AMEMBASSY LONDON  
 AMEMBASSY PARIS  
 AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
 AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
 AMEMBASSY ROME  
 AMCONSUL KARACHI

*Handwritten notes and signatures:*  
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USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE  
CINCPAC AND CENTCOM FOR POLADS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/27/2007  
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, AF, PK, TR, UN, US  
 SUBJ: AFGHANISTAN: [REDACTED] BRIEFS THE AMBASSADOR  
 ON HIS ACTIVITIES. PLEADS FOR GREATER ACTIVISM BY U.N.

REFS: A) ISLAMABAD 6503 B) ISLAMABAD 6454 C) ISLAMABAD 6309  
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(U) CLASSIFIED BY POLCOUNS THOMAS PRICE PURSUANT TO 1.5 (B), (D).

1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE; ACTION REQUEST IS IN PARA (10).

2. (C) SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 27, [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] REVIEWED HIS ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL  
 MONTHS AND PROVIDED A DETAILED UPDATE OF WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE  
 HIS LAST MEETING WITH US ON AUGUST 1 (REFTEL A). HIGHLIGHTS OF THE  
 PAST FEW WEEKS WERE HIS TRIP TO TEHRAN AUGUST 4-5, A DUBAI MEETIG  
 WITH QANUNI ON AUGUST 10, AND AN AUGUST 14 MEETING IN KANDAHAR WITH  
 MULLAH HASSAN AND MULLAH JALIL. AT THAT LAST MEETING, HE ADVANCED  
 A PROPOSAL, TO WHICH HE IS STILL AWAITING A RESPONSE, THAT THE  
 POLITICAL COMMISSION WHICH BOTH SIDES HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO  
 ESTABLISH SHOULD BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: ONE TO WORK ON A  
 CEASEFIRE AND EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS, AND THE OTHER TO DISCUSS A  
 FUTURE MULTI-ETHNIC GOVERNMENT FOR AFGHANISTAN. THE GOP IS,  
 ACCORDING TO THE [REDACTED] CONVINCED THAT THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE  
 IS VERY SHAKY (REFS B AND C), AND THAT "ALL THE TALIBAN HAVE TO DO  
 IS TO CEASE ALL MILITARY ACTIVITY AND THE ALLIANCE WILL CRUMBLE."

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL  
 APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED  
 REASON(S): B1, 1.4(D)  
 DATE/CASE ID: 29 OCT 2004 200104202

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK E SCHMELZER  
 DATE/CASE ID: 18 DEC 2003 200104202

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IT BELIEVES THAT DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS THE FOCUS OF TENSION HAS SHIFTED FROM KABUL TO KUNDUZ, WHERE FAMILIAR TALIBAN BLUNDERS HAVE PUT THE ALLIANCE IN A POSITION TO GIVE THE TALIBAN A BEATING. IT ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE UNSMA NEEDS TO BE FAR MORE ACTIVE, AS DO THE "OUTSIDE BACKERS" OF THE VARIOUS FACTIONS, IN PUSHING THE PARTIES TOWARDS PEACE. FINALLY, THE GOP ASKED US TO SUPPORT THE OIC DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE "VACANT SEAT POLICY" TOWARD AFGHANISTAN AT THE UN, AS A WAY OF OFFERING THE TWO SIDES AN INCENTIVE TO BEGIN TO TALK WITH EACH OTHER. END SUMMARY.

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3. (C) ON AUGUST 27, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] BRIEFED THE AMBASSADOR, DCM, AND POLCOONS ON HIS ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS AND PROVIDED A DETAILED UPDATE ON WHAT HE HAS DONE SINCE HIS LAST MEETING WITH US ON AUGUST 1. IN DISCUSSING HIS ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, [REDACTED] SHOWED AN UNCHARACTERISTIC MODESTY, BUT BASICALLY STUCK TO THE STORY HE HAD GIVEN US AT OUR LAST MEETING (REF A). HE ADDED A FEW DETAILS, AND REVISED THE RECORD ON WHAT HE HAD ADVISED THE TALIBAN TO DO IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THIS TIME, HE CLAIMED TO HAVE TOLD THEM NOT ONLY TO IMPROVE THEIR RHETORIC ON WOMEN, BUT ALSO TO APPEAR TO BE MORE TOLERANT AND LESS RIGID ON UNIMPORTANT MATTERS, SUCH AS THE LENGTH OF A MAN'S BEARD. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE TERM "BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT" HAD BECOME ANATHEMA FOR THE TALIBAN, BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT TO MEAN THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE THEY CONSIDER WAR CRIMINALS, COMMUNIST STOOGES, AND GODLESS TRAITORS, SUCH AS AHMED SHAH MASOOD, GENERAL MALIK, AND BURHANUDDIN RABBANI. THE POLITICALLY CORRECT TERM, AT LEAST FROM THE TALIBAN POINT OF VIEW, IS NOW "MULTI-ETHNIC GOVERNMENT."

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4. (C) SUMMARIZING THE POSITION AS OF AUGUST 1, [REDACTED] SAID THAT HE BELIEVED HE HAD AGREEMENT FROM ALL SIGNIFICANT OUTSIDE PARTIES (RUSSIA, IRAN, AND THE U.S.) THAT OUR SHARED OBJECTIVES FOR AFGHANISTAN WERE:

- THE RESTORATION OF A DURABLE PEACE,
- CESSATION OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN AFGHAN AFFAIRS, AND
- MAINTAINING THE UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF AFGHANISTAN.

THE SIGNIFICANT INSIDE PARTIES (TALIBAN, JUMBESH, JAMIAT, AND THE HEZB-I-WAHDAT) HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLITICAL COMMISSION TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN.

[REDACTED] THE "INSIDE" PARTIES HAD INSISTED ON VARIOUS PRE-CONDITIONS WHICH MADE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE OTHER SIDE TO AGREE TO MOVE TOWARD ESTABLISHING THIS POLITICAL COMMISSION. AT THE SAME TIME, EACH SIDE INSISTED THAT IT WAS URGENT TO GET THE BALL ROLLING, AND THAT DIRE CONSEQUENCES WOULD

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RESULT IF PROGRESS WERE NOT MADE QUICKLY.

5. (C) SHUTTLING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MAZAR AND KANDAHAR, WITH ONE SIDE TRIP TO FARKHAR, [REDACTED] BELIEVED THAT HE HAD GOTTEN BOTH SIDES TO SOFTEN UP ON THEIR "IMPOSSIBLE" PRE-CONDITIONS: THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE REALIZED THAT IT COULD NOT FIRST DEMAND THE DEMILITARIZATION OF KABUL AND THE TALIBAN REALIZED THAT IT COULD NOT INSIST ON A COMPLETE CEASEFIRE AND THE RETURN OF ALL PRISONERS. AT ONE POINT IN EARLY JULY, THE TALIBAN'S STATED PRE-CONDITION WAS JUST THE RELEASE OF THE FOUR "PEACE EMISSARIES." THE HIGH-PROFILE PRISONERS PRESUMED TO BE IN GENERAL MALIK'S CUSTODY, INCLUDING MULLAH GHAUS AND MULLAH EHSAN. A WEEK LATER, THE TALIBAN HAD MOVED EVEN FURTHER, AND AGREE TO TALK WITH MALIK WITHOUT ANY PRE-CONDITIONS, REASONING THAT "PERHAPS MALIK IS NOT A FREE AGENT; PERHAPS HE IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF MASOOD." AT THE SAME TIME,

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[REDACTED] REPORTED, MASOOD WAS "SINGING SWEET MUSIC TO US, WELCOMING US REGALLY IN FARKHAT AND TELLING US THAT 'YOU MAY THINK THAT ONLY SOME AFGHANS REGARD PAKISTAN AS A FRIEND, BUT YOU WOULD BE WRONG: NO AFGHAN CAN BE AN ENEMY OF PAKISTAN.'" MASOOD PROMISED TO USE HIS INFLUENCE IN MAZAR TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF THE FOUR HIGH-PROFILE PRISONERS, BUT -- FOR REASONS [REDACTED] EITHER COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT EXPLAIN -- NEITHER THIS PROMISE NOR THE TALIBAN PROMISE TO MEET WITH MALIK WITHOUT ANY PRE-CONDITIONS, WAS EVER HONORED.

6. (C) [REDACTED] WENT TO TEHRAN, MET BRIEFLY WITH A VELAYATI HE DESCRIBED AS "VERY DEPRESSED," AND HAD SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH BORUJERDI. HE TALKED ABOUT THE SHARED OBJECTIVES HE HOPES BOTH PAKISTAN AND IRAN HAVE IN AFGHANISTAN, OFFERING TO LET BORUJERDI ACCOMPANY HIM ON ANY OR ALL OF HIS VISITS TO KANDAHAR. THIS OFFER WAS DECLINED, BUT BORUJERDI DID REPORTEDLY ASK TO COME TO ISLAMABAD FOR A BRIEFING "AFTER [REDACTED]'S NEXT VISIT TO KANDAHAR." BORUJERDI ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO DISPEL THE NOTION THAT IRAN MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO SIT WITH THE U.S. IN AN AFGHANISTAN-RELATED CONFERENCE: "WE HAVE NO SUCH RESERVATIONS." HE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID, FROM TEHRAN, [REDACTED] WHERE HE WAITED FOR QANUNI TO ARRIVE FROM THE INTRA-AFGHAN MEETING IN FRANKFURT. QANUNI GAVE HIM WHAT WAS NO DOUBT A THOROUGH AND OBJECTIVE READ-OUT ON THAT MEETING, AND THEN MADE A STRONG PLEA FOR GOP HELP TO GET THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A POLITICAL COMMISSION UNDERWAY. [REDACTED] TOLD HIM THE NORTH WOULD HAVE TO STOP INSISTING ON THE DE-MILITARIZATION OF KABUL AS A PRE-CONDITION; QANUNI AGREED, BUT DEMURRED ON THE ISSUE OF PRISONERS, CLAIMING "THEY ARE NOT IN MY HANDS; THEY'RE IN MALIK'S," AND BEGGING FOR SPEED FROM THE GOP.

7. (C) [REDACTED] WHERE HE SAW MULLAH HASSAN AND MULLAH JALIL ON AUGUST 14. THEY PROMISED HIM THAT MULLAH OMAR WOULD RECEIVE HIM DURING HIS NEXT VISIT, "BECAUSE I HAD COME SO MANY TIMES AND THEY HAD GIVEN ME NOTHING." (NOTE: HE ALSO ENCOURAGED THEM TO ADVISE MULLAH OMAR TO RECEIVE UN SPECIAL ENVOY BRAHIMI; THEY HAD AGREED TO DO THIS, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] BUT BRAHIMI'S DELAYED ARRIVAL AND REFUSAL TO REMAIN OVERNIGHT THREW OFF THE SCHEDULE AND PREVENTED SUCH A MEETING FROM TAKING PLACE. BUT, [REDACTED] SAID, THE TALIBAN HAVE ASSURED HIM THAT IF BRAHIMI RETURNS TO KANDAHAR, HE WILL GET A MEETING WITH OMAR. END NOTE) [REDACTED] SAID THAT "I PROPOSED TO THEM THAT WE DIVIDE THE WORK OF THE SOON-TO-BE-ESTABLISHED POLITICAL COMMISSION INTO TWO AREAS: WORK ON A CEASEFIRE AND PRISONER EXCHANGE AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY, A DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE, MULTI-ETHNIC GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN. THEY SEEMED TO REACT FAVORABLY; AND PROMISED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH BOTH MULLAH OMAR AND THE SHURA, BUT I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET TO KANDAHAR SINCE THEN, SO I DO NOT YET HAVE A FORMAL RESPONSE." [REDACTED] PLANS TO RETURN TO KANDAHAR IN ABOUT TEN DAYS' TIME.

8. (C) AT THIS POINT, [REDACTED] GAVE A LONG ANALYSIS, WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL, OF STRAINS IN THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE, CONCLUDING THAT "IF THE TALIBAN WOULD SIMPLY CEASE ALL MILITARY ACTIVITY, THE ALLIANCE WOULD FALL APART." EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE UZBEKS FAVOR DOSTAM'S RETURN AND, TO ILLUSTRATE THEIR DISAFFECTION FROM MALIK, HE SAID THAT MALIK IS IN SUCH BAD ODOR THAT EVEN SOME OF HIS OWN MEN ARE REFERRING TO HIM AS "MRS. MASOOD." IN CLOSING, [REDACTED]

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SUMMED UP WHAT HE CONSIDERED THE MODEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS OWN BRAND OF SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY AS FOLLOWS:

- PAKISTAN'S CREDIBILITY WITH THE NORTH HAS MOVED FROM 0% TO 15%;
- PAKISTAN HAS RE-ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH MASOOD AFTER A 3-YEAR HIATUS;
- IRAN HAS BEEN GIVEN A JOLT, A SORT OF WAKE-UP CALL;

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-- THE NORTH HAS DROPPED ITS INSISTENCE ON THE DE-MILITARIZATION OF KABUL AS A PRE-CONDITION TO FURTHER STEPS, AND

-- THE TALIBAN HAVE REDUCED THEIR DEMAND FOR A RELEASE OF PRISONERS FROM 100% TO 30%.

THE AMBASSADOR CONGRATULATED HIM ON THESE "SMALL BUT IMPORTANT STEPS." BUT POINTED OUT THAT [REDACTED]'S SUCCESS IN GAINING CREDIBILITY IN THE NORTH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AT DR. HOLL'S EXPENSE. "THAT PART OF THE PUZZLE, AT LEAST, REALLY IS A ZERO-SUM GAME," THE AMBASSADOR SAID, "AND TO SOME EXTENT YOU'VE ACTUALLY REPLACED DR. HOLL. WHAT IF THE UN WANTS TO RESUME A FULL AND IMPARTIAL SHUTTLE ROLE?" [REDACTED] SAID THAT NOTHING COULD MAKE THE GOP HAPPIER, AND THAT PART OF THE REASON HE HAD BEEN SO ACTIVE IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS WAS THAT THE UN HAD SEEMED TO BE DOING SO LITTLE. IN FACT, HE ADMITTED TO HAVING NO CONTACT AT ALL WITH DR. HOLL FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST THREE MONTHS, AND TO BEING UNDER PRESSURE FROM HIS PRIME MINISTER WHO HAD TOLD HIM IN LATE JUNE TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO "SOLVE THE AFGHAN CONUNDRUM IN ONE WEEK." WHEN [REDACTED] AND OTHERS PRESENT AT THIS MEETING HAD PROTESTED AT SUCH A PREPOSTEROUS DEADLINE, THE PM REPORTEDLY RELENDED AND SAID, "OKAY; TAKE TWO WEEKS."

9. (C) THE AMBASSADOR GAVE [REDACTED] HIS "PERSONAL" ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION: EVERYONE AGREES ON THE OBJECTIVES, BUT THEY ALL FEEL THEY HAVE A LOT TO LOSE BY TAKING THE FIRST STEP IN MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD THOSE OBJECTIVES. PAKISTAN HAS A "PRIVILEGED ASSOCIATION" WITH THE TALIBAN, BUT NOT CONTROL OVER THEM; IRAN, AND PERHAPS UZBEKISTAN AND RUSSIA, HAVE SIMILAR PRIVILEGED ASSOCIATIONS WITH OTHER PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT, BUT WHERE DOES THAT LEAD US IN TERMS OF PRACTICAL STEPS? HOW CAN WE USE THOSE PRIVILEGED ASSOCIATIONS, AND THE LIMITED DEGREE OF MUTUAL TRUST THAT GOES WITH THEM, TO ADVANCE TOWARD THE SHARED OBJECTIVES? "I FEAR," CONCLUDED THE AMBASSADOR, "THAT THE AFGHANS FIRST NEED TO HAVE A FEELING OF DESPAIR ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF WINNING MILITARILY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TALIBAN STILL SEEM TO BELIEVE NOT ONLY THAT GOD IS ON THEIR SIDE, BUT THAT THE PEOPLE ARE TOO."

10. (C) [REDACTED] RESPONDED BY MAKING SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE GOP'S BELIEF THAT THE TALIBAN WILL EVENTUALLY WIN AND, WHEN FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF GOVERNING THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, WILL YIELD TO TECHNOCRATS SUCH AS ARSALA AND OTHERS WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE FRANKFURT MEETING. THE AMBASSADOR OPINED IN RESPONSE THAT THOSE WHO WANT PEACE WILL PROBABLY NOT WANT TO WAIT FOR THE TALIBAN TO MODERATE AFTER THEIR VICTORY -- IT HAD TAKEN A GENERATION AND A MAJOR WAR BEFORE WE COULD WORK AT ALL WITH THE BOLSHIEVICS, FOR INSTANCE -- AND WE SHOULD PROBABLY WORK FOR PEACE ON SOME ASSUMPTION OTHER THAN TALIBAN VICTORY. [REDACTED] THEN ASKED, "ON A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS," WHETHER THE USG WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONFERENCE ABOUT AFGHANISTAN WITHOUT THE AFGHAN PARTIES, BUT WITH ALL OF AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS (IRAN, TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, CHINA, AND PAKISTAN) AND RUSSIA. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS WHOLLY PREMATURE TO HOLD SUCH A MEETING, THAT THE IMPETUS FOR PEACE HAS TO COME FROM A SORT OF DIALECTIC BETWEEN THOSE OUTSIDE PARTIES AND THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES, AND THAT THE PROCESS COULD NOT NOW BE HELPED ALONG BY A MEETING WHICH EXCLUDED THE AFGHANS. [REDACTED] THEN ASKED FOR US SUPPORT OF THE "VACANT-SEAT" POLICY AT THE UN, AS AGREED BY THE OIC AT ITS LAST MEETING. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WOULD PASS THIS REQUEST ALONG, NOTING [REDACTED]'S ARGUMENT THAT IT COULD BE AN INDUCEMENT TO BOTH SIDES TO REACH OUT TO EACH OTHER SO

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THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD STILL HAVE A VOICE IN THE UN.

11. (C) THE AMBASSADOR GAVE HIS VIEW THAT THE TRICK WOULD BE TO RELATE TWO EXISTING LEVELS OF REALITY TO EACH OTHER IN PRODUCTIVE

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WAYS. AT ONE LEVEL, ALL THE PARTIES AGREED TO THE THREE OBJECTIVES [REDACTED] HAD DESCRIBED IN PRINCIPLE, BUT THE INSIDE PARTIES STILL HOPED FOR OR FEARED A TALIBAN VICTORY, MISTRUSTED EACH OTHER, AND WERE UNPREPARED FOR REAL NEGOTIATION OF A REAL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. AT ANOTHER LEVEL, PAKISTAN HAD PRIVILEGED RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AND IRAN (AND PERHAPS RUSSIA AND UZBEKISTAN) WITH THE NORTH. THE CHALLENGE WAS TO USE THOSE PRIVILEGED RELATIONS AS LEVERAGE TO ADVANCE THE OBJECTIVES AGREED IN PRINCIPLE. OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN ASSOCIATE US WILLY-NILLY, SO WE NEED TO BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL ABOUT PAKISTANI PROPOSALS THAT DRAW US EVEN CLOSER. FOR, AT THE SECOND LEVEL, PAKISTAN IS A PARTY RATHER THAN JUST A MEDIATOR; MOREOVER, ONE FEATURE OF THE SITUATION IS THAT WE DO NOT RELATE DIRECTLY TO IRAN, THE ANALOGOUS PARTY ON THE OTHER SIDE. THAT WAS ONE REASON WE SEE THE UN'S MEDIATING ROLE AS ESSENTIAL.

12. (C) [REDACTED] PROTESTED RATHER WEAKLY THAT TOTAL PAK AID TO THE TALIBAN THROUGH THE END OF 1996 HAD BEEN ONLY 20 MILLION RUPEES, AN ISI FIGURE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT EVEN IF HE ACCEPTED THAT FIGURE, IT DID NOT INCLUDE ACCESS TO PAK WHEAT AND POL, OR THE TRUCKS AND BUSES FULL OF ADOLESCENT MUJAHID CROSSING THE FRONTIER SHOUTING "ALLAHU AKBAR" AND GOING INTO THE LINE WITH A DAY OR TWO OF WEAPONS TRAINING. THAT WAS PAKISTAN'S REAL AID. HE ASKED [REDACTED] HOW THE 'GOP WAS DOING IN ITS ATTEMPT TO CONTROL THE FLOW OF WHEAT AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO AFGHANISTAN. [REDACTED] REPLIED THAT HE HAD RUN INTO A MAJOR PROBLEM ON AUGUST 26 -- NOT WITH THE TALIBAN, BUT WITHIN HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WAS INSISTING ON SELLING WHEAT AT TEN RUPEES PER KILO, WHEREAS THE GOING PRICE IN PESHAWAR IS ONLY 6.5 RUPEES PER KILO. FM GOHAR AYUB KHAN HAD BROUGHT THIS UP AT A CABINET MEETING, AND THE PM HAD ASKED HIM AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO SORT IT OUT. SO FAR, THAT HAD MEANT GETTING THE OTHER MINISTRY TO AGREE TO REDUCE ITS ASKING PRICE TO 9 RUPEES PER KILO, GUARANTEED THROUGH APRIL, 1998. THAT IS STILL FAR TOO HIGH. [REDACTED] DECLARED, "AND I HAVE NOT YET SAID ANYTHING TO THE AFGHANS. IF I GO TO THEM WITH THIS PRICE, MY CREDIBILITY WILL BE RUINED." SIMONS

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