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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 01656 00 OF 02 271252Z

ACTION: SA(01)

INFO: CMS(00) D(00) EAO(00) INR(00) INR(01)
MR(01) P(01) S(01) SS(01) SSO(01)
===== 270834L FEB 97 JRD (TOTAL COPIES:007)

INFO: SS(00) WO(00)
===== 271319Z FEB 97 STEPS (TOTAL COPIES:000)

ACTION SS-00

INFO LOG-00 OAS-00 ADS-00 /000W
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O 271251Z FEB 97
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5169
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART

B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

- AMEMBASSY ANKARA
- AMEMBASSY RIYADH
- AMEMBASSY ALMATY
- USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA J5/
- AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
- AMEMBASSY BEIJING
- AMEMBASSY PARIS
- AMEMBASSY ROME
- AMEMBASSY LONDON
- AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
- DIA WASHDC
- AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
- AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
- AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
- AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
- USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

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DECAPIOTED

EXDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/07
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, KISL, PK, AF
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN [] ON AFGHANISTAN, HUA, BIN B1
LADEN

REFS: (A) ISLAMABAD 1592; (B) ISLAMABAD 1113

1. (U) Classified by Thomas W. Simons, Jr., Ambassadors. Reason: 1.5 (b) and (d).

2. (C) Ambassador (ret) Robert Oakley and General (ret) Joseph Hoar, in Islamabad for a Track-II meeting, met with Pakistani [] and Oakley later met separately with []. Both meetings were private and took place February 20. Ambassador Oakley prepared the following memorandum of conversation at my request.

Begin Text:

3. (C) [] discussed Afghanistan, and [] covered the subject in greater detail. Both were concerned over the negative effects of Taliban military successes on the attitudes of Afghanistan's neighbors plus Russia toward Pakistan and over the boost this has given India to gain greater influence at Pakistan's expense. They were more worried

about the future, should Taliban be able to move further north. They understood the fear that Taliban would force armed Tajiks, Uzbeks and others (Afghan groups, Arabs, etc.) into Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and even Turkmenistan, and the very serious danger this could create for Pakistan over the long term. They were also very fearful of a possible Pushtoon nationalist/Islamic radical blowback into Pakistan, which already has enough sectarian/ethnic/religious problems.

4. (C) [] expressed concerns over the presence of HUA camps and fighters inside Afghanistan with approval of Taliban, and of Saudi terrorist financier Bin Laden. [] said he had helped arrange for U.S. Embassy personnel to visit HUA camps and hoped this might help. Oakley and [] discussed blowbacks already experienced with mujahadin groups, Afghan and Arab terrorists and narcotics dealers, etc. [] recognized the similarity with India, where RAW already assisted Tamil Tigers who in turn inflicted heavy casualties on the Indian Army and assassinated PM Rajiv Gandhi. In that context, he found HUA very disturbing.

5. (C) [] went on to describe potential Pakistani leverage over Taliban, most importantly the fact that almost all their food and petroleum comes to them from Pakistan. For revenue purposes, as well as to prepare for use of this leverage, there were plans to restrict and control the number of border crossing points. The tough part would be how to use this leverage to obtain positive results rather than simply angering the Taliban and provoking disruptive action directed at Pakistan.

6. (C) Oakley held similar discussions on the potential advantages and downsides of Taliban success with several senior Pakistanis, including Senate President Wasim Sajjad, former National Assembly SPEAKER (FYI and newly appointed Foreign Minister END FYI) Gohar Ayub, former (and current) Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz, and former Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan and Abdul Sattar. He urged each to encourage the Nawaz Sharif Government to establish sensible, realistic policies toward Afghanistan and the Taliban, and to pay particular attention to ISID, which appears to be providing unquestioning support to harder liners among the Taliban, i.e. those from madrasses and refugee camps in the Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan. The issue appears to be not so much one of Taliban dominance of Afghanistan as how that dominance is exercised and relations with Afghanistan's neighbors.

END TEXT.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE TALIBAN HAVE TWICE POSTPONED THE VISIT TO THE MILITANT CAMPS AND HAVE NOT YET AGREED TO A DATE FOR A VISIT (REF B). WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY ROLE [] MAY HAVE HAD WITH THE TALIBAN DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO ALLOW A VISIT. OAKLEY'S POINT ABOUT ISID IS WELL-TAKEN. ACCORDING TO []

[], ISID HAS ADVOCATED PAKISTANI RECOGNITION OF THE TALIBAN AS AFGHANISTAN'S GOVERNMENT (REF A). THE MFA HAS RESISTED THIS PROPOSAL, ACCORDING TO [] HAS ALSO CLAIMED THAT ISID HAS SUCCESSFULLY WARD OFF MFA PROPOSALS TO CLOSE CERTAIN MADRASSEH IN THE TRIBAL AGENCIES AND NEAR THE AFGHAN BORDER, WHICH HAVE BEEN THE SPAWNING GROUNDS FOR TALIBAN HARD-LINERS.
SIMONS

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