

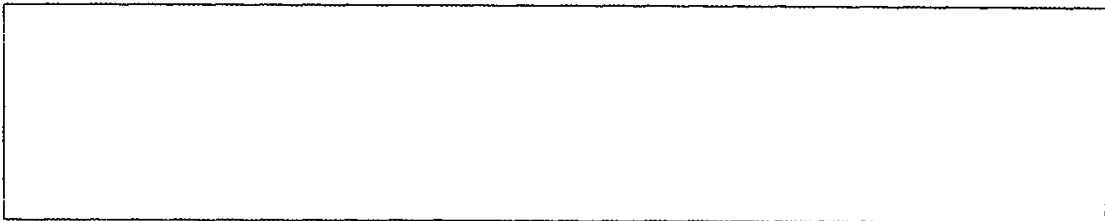
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SERIAL: (U) IIR [REDACTED]

TEXT

COUNTRY: (U) AFGHANISTAN (AF), PAKISTAN (PK).

IPSP: (U) [REDACTED]

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COMBINE: COMPLETE

SUBJ: IIR [REDACTED] /VETERAN AFGHANISTAN TRAVELER'S ANALYSIS OF AL QAEDA AND TALIBAN MILITARY, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ITS WEAKNESSES ~~(S)~~ [REDACTED]

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WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED ~~SECRET NOFORN~~.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 20010924.

REQS: (U) [REDACTED]

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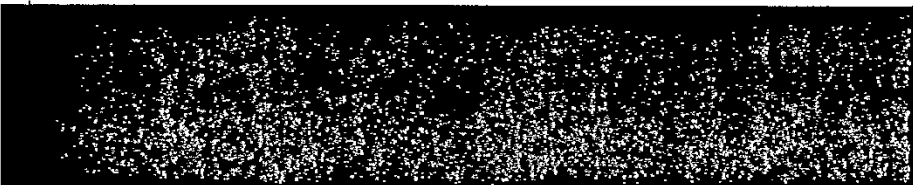
SUMMARY: ~~(S)~~ [REDACTED] PAKISTAN INTRODUCED THE TALIBAN TO PROJECT ITS POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. THEIR PLAN FAILED AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS AND RESULTED IN LOSING CONTROL OF ALL THE FACTIONS INVOLVED. THE AL QAEDA AGENDA IN AFGHANISTAN DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THAT OF THE TALIBAN AND THE AFGHANI PEOPLE.

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TEXT: 1. (S) [REDACTED]

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2. (C) [REDACTED] POLITICAL HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN. DURING THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR THE WEST PREFERRED TO MAINTAIN A POLICY OF DENIABILITY AND ALLOWED PAKISTAN TO HANDLE THE DAILY ADMINISTRATION OF THE WAR, CASH, AND ARMS DISTRIBUTION. IT WAS A TASK PAKISTAN CARRIED OUT WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM AND THEY HELPED THEMSELVES TO A GENEROUS PORTION OF CASH AND ARMS. THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT ALSO HAD A HIDDEN AGENDA. SHOULD THE SOVIETS EVER LEAVE THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONTEND WITH SOMETHING THE WEST DID NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH. IT WAS STILL GOING TO BE IN PAKISTAN, WITH ALL TIDES AND CURRENTS OF REGIONAL PROBLEMS. UNLIKE THE WEST, THEY WERE CONCERNED WITH WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER THE WAR TO ENSURE INFLUENCE OVER ANY GOVERNMENT THAT CAME TO POWER IN AFGHANISTAN AFTER A SOVIET WITHDRAWAL PAKISTAN DECIDED TO DIRECTLY INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. RATHER THAN ALLOW THE MOST GIFTED AFGHAN COMMANDERS AND PARTIES TO FLOURISH, WHO WOULD BE HARD TO CONTROL LATER, PAKISTAN PREFERRED TO GROOM THE INCOMPETENT ONES FOR THE ROLE OF FUTURE LEADERS OF AFGHANISTAN. BEING INCOMPETENT THEY WOULD BE WHOLLY RELIANT ON PAKISTAN FOR SUPPORT. THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARY OF THIS POLICY WAS GULBADIN ((HEKMATYR)). HIS CREDENTIALS WERE THAT OF AN ANTI-WESTERN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST WHO REPORTEDLY BOASTED ABOUT THROWING ACID IN THE FACES OF WOMEN WHO DID NOT WEAR THE TRADITIONAL ALL COVERING AFGHAN CHADDA AT KABUL UNIVERSITY.

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A. (C) [REDACTED] ARAB INTRODUCTION. IN TANDEM WITH FAVORING THE INCOMPETENT HEKMATYR OVER MORE ENTERPRISING AND GIFTED COMMANDERS (SUCH AS THE AHMAD SHAH ((MASSOUD)), THE TADJIK COMMANDER FROM NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN), PAKISTAN ALSO ENCOURAGED, FACILITATED AND OFTEN ESCORTED ARABS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST INTO AFGHANISTAN. EVENTUALLY A SPECIAL FACILITY WAS CONSTRUCTED IN ZAHWA (CNA), IN PAKTIA PROVINCE, WITH PAKISTAN INTER-SERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE (ISI) FUNDING. THE LOCAL AFGHAN MUJAHIDEEN COMMANDER WAS JALALUDDIN ((HAQANI)). AS AN INFLUENTIAL TRIBAL LEADER FROM PAKTIA, HAQANI WAS ABLE TO NEGOTIATE THE USE OF THE LAND FROM THE JADRAN TRIBE HE BELONGED TO.

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B. (C) [REDACTED] THE CIVIL WAR. IN THE WAKE OF THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL IN 1989, CAME CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE REMNANTS OF THE AFGHAN COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT AND AFGHAN MUJAHIDEEN GROUPS THAT WERE FORCED INTO AN UNHAPPY ALLIANCE. THIS PERIOD INVOLVED VERY CASUALTY HEAVY FIGHTING UNDER PAKISTAN ISI, MOST NOTABLY IN ATTACKS ON JALALABAD / [REDACTED]

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C. (C) [REDACTED] ARABS IN AFGHANISTAN. "VISITORS" FROM THE MIDDLE EAST HAD BEEN IN EVIDENCE SINCE THE VERY EARLY PART OF THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR. HOWEVER, THEY LACKED NUMBERS, CONFIDENCE, EXPERIENCE, OR BONDING TIES SUFFICIENT TO GIVE THEM A SEPARATE IDENTITY FROM THEIR HOSTS. THIS WAS ALLOWED TO EVOLVE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, WHICH WAS EFFECTIVELY THE INCUBATION OF AL QAEDA. FOR THE FIRST TIME, LARGER NUMBERS OF ARABS WERE OBSERVED IN AFGHANISTAN DURING THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL. ONE OF THE KEY FEATURES OF THE PAKTIA

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BORDER PROVINCE, IN WHICH THEY WERE FIRST ESTABLISHED, WAS THAT IT HAD NO RUSSIANS. THE EARLY PHASE OF INVOLVEMENT WAS ABOUT PERCEPTIONS RATHER THAN ACTIONS. AT THAT POINT THE ARAB VISITORS WERE LARGELY LINKED AND RELIANT ON HAQANI'S MUJAHIDEEN IN PAKTIA. D. ~~(S)~~ THE FAILURE OF HEKMATYR. WHEN KABUL FINALLY FELL IT WAS AHMAD SHAH ((MASSOUD)) WHO CAPTURED IT, NOT HEKMATYR, THE INCOMPETENT ZEALOT FAVORED BY PAKISTAN. PAKISTAN COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS RESULT AND THE FRAGILE AFGHAN COALITION GOVERNMENT BEGAN ANOTHER CIVIL WAR, WITH THE PAKISTAN STOOGES (HEKMATYR) BEING BACKED TO SEIZE TOTAL POWER. IN THE END PAKISTAN WAS PROVED RIGHT ABOUT ONLY ONE THING, HEKMATYR WAS INCOMPETENT. HE WAS NEVER ABLE TO WREST KABUL FROM MASSOUD, DESPITE MASSIVE LOGISTICAL AND MATERIAL (INCLUDING MANPOWER) SUPPORT FROM PAKISTAN. AGAINST THIS FAILURE IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT PAKISTAN HAS LOST EVERY WAR IT HAS EVER FOUGHT.

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3. ~~(S)~~ INTRODUCTION OF THE TALIBAN (LEBANONIZATION). AFTER YEARS OF FUTILE EFFORT, WHICH EFFECTIVELY SAW THE LEBANONIZATION OF AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN FINALLY ABANDONED HEKMATYR. HOWEVER, NOT IN FAVOR OF A MORE RATIONAL POLICY, INSTEAD THEY SET ABOUT DOING THE SAME THING ALL OVER AGAIN. THEY CREATED ANOTHER FORCE THEY HOPED TO HAVE BETTER CONTROL OVER THAN HEKMATYR'S RABBLE. IT WAS CALLED TALIBAN, THE ARABIC NAME "TALIB" BEING LITERALLY TRANSLATED AS "ASKER" OR "SEEKER". TALIBAN MEANING "THE SEEKERS", SIGNIFYING A STUDENT OF DIVINITY. THIS INSPIRED TITLE HELPED CLOAK PAKISTAN'S HIDDEN AGENDA IN A NEW ISLAMIC COAT. A. ~~(S)~~ TO LEAD THE TALIBAN PAKISTAN CHOSE MULLAH MOHAMMAD ((OMAR)), WHO WAS WILLING TO DO AS HE WAS TOLD. ACCORDING TO TALIBAN PROPAGANDA THE MULLAH WAS DIVINELY INSPIRED TO RID AFGHANISTAN OF THE TROUBLESOME WAR AND WARLORDS. AFGHANISTAN WAS BLIGHTED WITH BOTH, LARGELY DUE TO YEARS OF CIVIL WAR SPONSORED BY PAKISTAN AND RELIANT ON THE STOCKPILE OF ARMS PLUNDERED FROM A COVERT WESTERN ARMS PIPELINE FROM THE OLD SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR DAYS. THE MULLAH EMERGED WITH A FULLY FUNCTIONING, FULLY ARMED CONVENTIONALLY EQUIPPED, FULLY TRAINED MILITARY FORCE PRONE TO LARGE SCALE CONVENTIONAL ACTIONS. OMAR'S EMERGENCE IS CREDITED TO PAKISTAN ISI ACTIONS. THE ISI PRESSURED HAQANI TO UNDERTAKE ACTION AGAINST MATUN

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~~(S)~~ (THE PRINCIPAL TOWN IN KHOST, PAKTIA PROVINCE).

B. ~~(S)~~ TALIBAN PREVAIL. WITH HAQANI'S POORLY TRAINED PEASANT MUJAHIDEEN THERE WAS BOTH GREAT LOSS OF AFGHAN LIFE AND REPEATED FAILURE. IN THE WAKE OF THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL, ISI ALSO ORCHESTRATED AND DIRECTED THE SAME FAILED STRATEGIES AGAINST JALALABAD, WITH EVEN HEAVIER AFGHAN CASUALTIES. THE REPEATED PRONOUNCED PATTERN UNDER ISI DIRECTION HAS BEEN TO IGNORE THE POORLY TRAINED GUERRILLA NATURE OF THE AFGHAN MUJAHIDEEN AND PRESS THEM TO CONDUCT CONVENTIONAL-STYLE ENGAGEMENT, THE SAME STYLE THAT TALIBAN ARE CREDITED WITH LEARNING FROM THE KORAN. AS A RESULT OF THESE ACTIONS, THE FULLY SUPPORTED (BY PAKISTAN) TALIBAN PREVAILED OVER THE UNSUPPORTED LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN.

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4. ~~(S)~~ THE ENEMY AS TALIBAN. THE TALIBAN IS ESSENTIALLY IMPORTANT TO AL QAEDA BUT IS NOT A NATURAL AFGHAN PHENOMENON. WHILE IT HAS SWAY OVER 90 PERCENT OF AFGHANISTAN, IT DOES NOT HAVE 90 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR SUPPORT. AS SUCH ITS ROOTS ARE NOT THAT DEEP AND NEED NOT REPRESENT THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN. EXPLOITING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AL QAEDA AND TALIBAN CAN BE MADE TO WORK

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AGAINST AL QAEDA.

5. ~~(C)~~ INTRODUCTION OF THE TALIBAN. THE TALIBAN IS NOT (b)(2)
SYNONYMOUS WITH AFGHANISTAN. IT WAS CREATED, IMPOSED AND
RECOGNIZED BY PAKISTAN IN PURSUIT OF ITS OWN INTERESTS. PLAYING
THE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST CARD AS A MEANS OF SECURING CONTROL
OVER A COMPLIANT PROXY REGIME IN NEIGHBORING AFGHANISTAN HAS
SERIOUSLY BACKFIRED. PAKISTAN HAS ALSO LOST CONTROL OF THE
TALIBAN, WHO ARE PROVING TO BE BOTH UNPREDICTABLE AND UNGRATEFUL.
UNDER THE SHADE OF THE TALIBAN UMBRELLA THE BIN LADEN BRAND OF
EXTREMISM HAS BEEN ABLE TO GROW UNMOLESTED INSIDE AFGHANISTAN.

6. ~~(C)~~ TALIBAN WEAKNESSES. WESTERN POLICY STRIVES TO (b)(2)
FIND A UNITY OF ORDER IN AFGHANISTAN; HOWEVER, THE PREVAILING
TREND IS A UNITY OF CHAOS. USED TO ORDER WESTERNERS SEE CHAOS AS
FAILURE. IT IS AN ALTERNATE SYSTEM ALIEN TO WESTERN THOUGHT, BUT
DOES NOT MEAN IT CANNOT WORK. AS SUCH IN THE MARTIAL ARENA CHAOS,
ITS CREATION AND EXPLOITATION SHOULD BE PART OF ALLIED STRATEGY.
IN ADDITION, THE MEDIA ARE WIDELY DESCRIBING THE TALIBAN REGIME AS
UNPREDICTABLE. IT IS, BUT ONLY TO THOSE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT.
SEEN FROM THE TALIBAN'S VIEW, THEIR DECISION MAKING PROCESS IS
PREDICTABLE.

7. ~~(C)~~ THE WIDE DIVIDE. THERE IS A LARGE DIVIDE BETWEEN (b)(2)
WESTERN AND AFGHAN PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND METHODS.
UNDERSTANDING THEM MATTERS. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THERE
ARE FOUR VERY DIFFERENT AGENDAS AT ISSUE.

A. ~~(C)~~ UNITED FRONT. ALSO KNOWN AS THE NORTHERN (b)(2)
ALLIANCE, IT SUPPORTS AN INDEPENDENT AFGHAN STATE, ISLAMIC IN NATURE
AND BASED ON AFGHAN IDEALS. HOWEVER, THE CONFLICT HAS FAR MORE TO
DO WITH DEEP ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVIDES BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL
GROUPS THAN DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON ISLAMIC INTERPRETATIONS.
THESE ARE THE CRACKS THAT PAKISTAN SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED IN
CREATING THE TALIBAN. ON THE GROUND THE WAR BETWEEN UNITED FRONT
AND TALIBAN IS NOT A WAR ABOUT INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAM. IT IS
ABOUT ETHNIC DIFFERENCES AND HISTORICAL ROOTS. THE TADJIKS OF THE
NORTH ARE OUTNUMBERED BY THE PUSHTOONS. WHILE THE WEST SEES
AFGHANISTAN AS A SINGULAR NATION FEW AFGHANS HAVE ANY REAL GRASP
OF THIS CONCEPT. TO MOST OF THE PUSHTOONS, THE TADJIKS ARE SIMPLY
UNTRUSTWORTHY NORTHERNERS UNABLE TO SPEAK PUSHTU. THE UNITED
FRONTS AREA OF CONTROL HAS GRADUALLY BEEN ERODED BECAUSE THEY ARE
OUTNUMBERED AND POORLY SUPPORTED.

B. ~~(C)~~ TALIBAN AGENDA. THE TALIBAN AGENDA IS THE (b)(2)
COMPLETE CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN, USING WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY TO
ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. THIS IS PRINCIPALLY RELIANT ON LOGISTIC AND
MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM PAKISTAN. IT HAD BEEN CREATED BY PAKISTAN
EXPLOITING POWERLESS AFGHAN FUNDAMENTALIST INDIVIDUALS AND
FACTIONS BY DANGLING IN FRONT OF THEM THE PROMISE OF AN ISLAMIC
STATE MOLDED TO THEIR DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS. THIS, AND CASH,
ENCOURAGED ENOUGH RECRUITS TO CLOAK THE TALIBAN WITH SEEMINGLY
IMPECCABLE ISLAMIC CREDENTIALS.

C. ~~(C)~~ THE AFGHANI STYLE OF ISLAM. THE FUNDAMENTALIST (b)(2)
HABITS THE TALIBAN ESPOUSED ARE LARGELY ALIEN TO THE MAJORITY OF
AFGHANS WHO TRADITIONALLY PRACTICED A FAIRLY RELAXED
INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM. AFGHANI PRACTITIONERS OF ISLAM ENJOYED
MUSIC, DANCING, RADIO, AND SPORTS. THE DEGREES OF PRACTICING
MUSLIMS NATURALLY VARIED BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL DWELLERS WITH
WOMEN AT KABUL UNIVERSITY AND A MORE RIGID USE OF PURDAH IN THE

REMOTER COUNTRYSIDE.

D. ~~(S)~~ THE PROMISE OF THE TALIBAN. THE ATTRACTION TO THE TALIBAN AMONG THE ALMOST DESTITUTE AFGHAN POPULATION WAS LESS IN ITS ISLAMIC CREDENTIALS THAN ITS PROMISE OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO A PROTRACTED WAR. IT WAS AT THE TIME A CONFLICT THAT HAD FAR EXCEEDED ITS POPULAR LIFE SPAN BUT WAS BEING ARTIFICIALLY PROLONGED BY OUTSIDE SPONSORS IN PURSUIT OF THEIR OWN AGENDA. HOWEVER, WHILE STILL HEAVILY RELIANT ON PAKISTAN SUPPORT, THE TALIBAN HAS NOW REMAINED IN POWER LONG ENOUGH TO DEVELOP AN INDEPENDENT MOMENTUM AND AUTONOMY NEVER ENVISIONED BY THEIR CREATORS. THIS MAKES IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR PAKISTAN TO MAINTAIN THE RIGID CONTROL THEY HAD IN MIND. THE TALIBAN CREATED, IMPOSED AND RECOGNIZED BY PAKISTAN PROVED UNPREDICTABLE AND UNGRATEFUL.

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8. ~~(S)~~ OSAMA BIN LADIN'S AL QAEDA. THE AL QAEDA AGENDA IN AFGHANISTAN DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THAT OF THE TALIBAN. THEY ARE NOT ABOUT CREATING AN INDEPENDENT AFGHAN ISLAMIC STATE. LONG TERM THERE CAN BE NO ROOM FOR TALIBAN IN THEIR AMBITIONS. HAVING BEING ARTIFICIALLY INTRODUCED TO THE REGION AND ENCOURAGED IN THEIR AMBITIONS SO FAR THEY HAVE GROWN IN CONFIDENCE AND STATURE. TALIBAN ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF FUNDAMENTALIST NON-AFGHANS AS PART OF THEIR FIGHTING FORCE WERE MERELY AN EXTENSION OF PAKISTANI POLICY DURING THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT MEMBERS OF 055 BRIGADE MIGHT SERVE WITH TALIBAN FORCES, BUT THEY ARE NOT IN ANY WESTERN SENSE INTEGRATED. THEY REMAIN RATHER LIKE AN INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE, DIFFERENT IN LANGUAGE, HABIT AND IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM. ADDITIONALLY, THEIR VISION OF THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN DIFFERS.

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9. ~~(S)~~ PAKISTAN AGENDA. PAKISTAN'S GOALS ARE SIMPLE, THE CONTINUANCE OF THE POLICY THEY HAVE ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED REGARDING AFGHANISTAN. IT IS FAILING WITH THE TALIBAN AND IT CANNOT SUCCEED UNDER ANY AFGHAN GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED BY AL QAEDA. THE REPERCUSSIONS FROM PAKISTAN'S ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE THE ISLAMIC CARD IS ONLY JUST SURFACING. IN ISLAMABAD THEY HAVE TRIED TO IGNORE OR BURY THE EVIDENCE FOR SOME TIME. IT MUST BE A DEEPLY TROUBLING PERIOD FOR GENERAL ((MUSHARRAF)) IN PAKISTAN, WHO IS ASKED TO HELP HUNT DOWN THE CULPRITS THAT HE HELPED TO ESTABLISH AND SUPPORTED. NOT TO SUPPORT THE U.S. INVITES TROUBLE AND TO ASSIST THE U.S. TO THEIR AIMS ALSO PRESENTS PROBLEMS TO PAKISTAN. THE QUANDARY LEAVES THE PAKISTANIS CONFUSED AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT BE ABSOLVED WITHOUT PERMANENTLY SHATTERING THEIR REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS OR THEIR GOVERNMENT.

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10. ~~(S)~~ THE TALIBAN HAD LITTLE TIME TO THINK THROUGH WHAT THE PRICE OF AL QAEDA SUPPORT MIGHT MEAN IN THE LONG TERM. THE TALIBAN WAS FOCUSED ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UNITED FRONT AND OTHER OPPOSITION FACTIONS. HOWEVER, DEMANDS TO DELIVER BIN LADEN MAY HAVE ALREADY BROUGHT ABOUT THE REALIZATION THAT THE TALIBAN ARE NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO DEMAND ANYTHING OF AL QAEDA. INTRIGUE AND PARANOIA ARE AFGHAN HABITS, AND WELL WORTH EXPLOITING.

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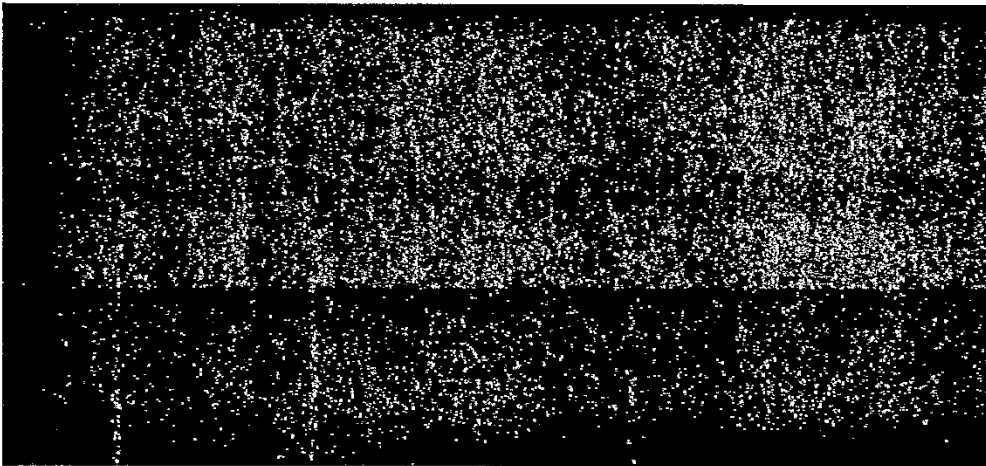
11. ~~(S)~~ DEATH OF AHMAD SHAH ((MASSOUD)). AHMAD SHAH ((MASSOUD)) WAS VERY UNASSUMING AND SOFTLY SPOKEN (IN FARSI, RUSHTO, URDU AND FRENCH). HE WAS THE CHIEF RIVAL OF TALIBAN AND THE CHIEF THORN IN AL QAEDA'S AMBITIONS AS WELL. MASSOUD'S DEATH SERVED BOTH TALIBAN AND AL QAEDA. UNLIKE THE TWIN TRADE TOWERS THE

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MURDER OF MASSOUD WAS A NO-LOSE SCENARIO FOR AL QAEDA. GENERAL MOHAMMAD ((FAHIM)) IS RECORDED AS THE NEW COMMANDER OF MASSOUD'S UNITED FRONT. WHETHER HE CAN KEEP IT UNITED REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
12. ~~(C)~~ HUMANITARIAN AID. SELECTIVE ALLIED HUMANITARIAN AID, STRICTLY MONITORED AND BEYOND TALIBAN CONTROL, WOULD REAP ENORMOUS BENEFITS IN THE ERADICATION OF AL QAEDA INSIDE AFGHANISTAN. JUST BOMBS, NO MATTER HOW SURGICAL THE STRIKE, CONVEYS TO THE AFGHAN MIND NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE AFGHAN AND THE ENEMY. AND YET ANY LONG LASTING RESOLUTION IS RELIANT ON ENSURING THAT DISTINCTION IS MADE, UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED NOT ONLY BY THE ALLIES BUT BY LOCAL POPULATIONS TO WHICH THE ENEMY PARASITICALLY ATTACH THEMSELVES.

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ADMIN

COLL: (U)

INSTR: (U)

PREP: (U)

ACQ: (U)

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DRV FROM: DHS SCG, OCTOBER 97.

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