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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2000

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INFO MEMO

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11 October 2001 4:00 P.M.

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DepSec Action _____

FROM: Douglas J. Feith, Under Secretary of Defense (Policy)

DSF by JF

SUBJECT: Afghanistan Strategy

For your PC meeting this afternoon, Thursday, October 11, 2001.

I. Goals re: al-Qaida

- Principal goal is to eliminate leadership and forces.
- Al-Qaida's main asset is people.
- Use Afghan forces from whatever faction to eliminate :
US needs a strategy of incentives -- rewards for success -- for Afghan forces.
- [redacted] and SOF should coordinate on implementing the incentives strategy and equipping and financing the Afghan forces to achieve this goal.

*Should be reduced agree
C. D. H. M. J.
Concur*

II. Goals re: Taliban

- Goal is to terminate rule of current Taliban leadership to make an example of them (as State sponsor) and to undercut al-Qaida.
- Creating a stable, post-Taliban Afghanistan is desirable but not necessarily within the power of the US. The USG should not allow concerns about stability to paralyze US efforts to oust the Taliban leadership.

~~Classified by: USDP, D.J. FEITH~~
~~Reason: 1.5(d)~~
~~Declassify on: 11OCT11~~

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Prepared by: Douglas J. Feith, USDP, [redacted]

III. Operations

- When the US has completed the initial bombing, now underway, the main US effort should begin to shift from direct US military action to less direct action—that is helping Afghan forces on the ground with equipment, intelligence, training and close air support, in particular against Taliban forward line of troops arrayed against opposition forces.
- As we concentrate on strengthening the hands of all Afghan factions willing to attack the Taliban leadership, we should distribute humanitarian aid to enhance the prestige and effectiveness of these Afghan factions.
- Facilitate capture before winter, if possible, of key cities--Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Kabul.
- Before Kabul is taken by Northern Alliance forces, US should try to arrange for the city to be administered by an international group that will relieve Pashtun fear of domination by Northern Alliance (Tajik-Uzbek) tribes.
- This international group may be UN-based or an ad hoc collection of volunteer states such as Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and other NATO states (but not US).
- US should intensify efforts to establish on-the-ground contacts in south as well as north.
 - US should secure areas into which fixed-wing aircraft can be flown to provide supplies, including substantial humanitarian assistance.
 - Ensure that US forces are seen primarily not as combat forces but as support for Afghan peoples struggling to free themselves of the Taliban and al-Qaida.
- Before fighting slows down in winter, use time to establish network of [redacted] and SOF contacts with Afghan factions. Provide equipment and training. Note that [redacted] has offered to train Afghans. Induce Taliban commanders to defect and to flush al-Qaida personnel out into the open.

))

Agree
[redacted]
concur
[redacted]

- As Afghan factions prove themselves by providing intelligence, eliminating enemy forces, capturing ground, we should visibly shift our support to the most effective factions.

IV. Working with the Pashtuns

- US should explore value of ties with King Zahir Shah.
 - Should not simply assume he is a non-player.
 - Do not underestimate how much one may become influential if seen to have confidence of a major power like the US.
- Key: Pashtun cohesion may be stimulated by successes of Northern Alliance.
- US should be wary of associating with the [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED]. Pashtuns also fear domination by Iranian-backed Shia.
- Nation-building is not our key strategic goal.

Ague
[REDACTED]
concur
[REDACTED]