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November 7, 2001

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: INR - Carl W. Ford, Jr.

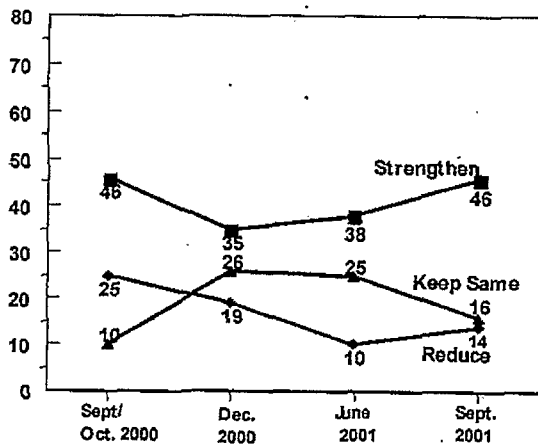
SUBJECT: Pakistan--Poll Shows Strong and Growing Public Support
for Taleban

President Musharraf faces a problem with public opinion that goes far beyond the minority of extremist Muslims. A just-completed INR poll shows the Pakistani public as a whole is now more favorable toward the Taleban than it was before the attacks of September 11 and recognizes no compelling reasons to cut Pakistan's traditionally strong links with the Taleban government. Poll findings document the difficulty and dangers of Musharraf's alignment with the U.S.

Polling began shortly after September 11; almost all interviews were completed before the start of bombing in Afghanistan. During this period, when the Pakistani government distanced itself from the Taleban, and public opinion:

Views on Pakistani Government Support for Taliban

Urban Pakistanis: 2000-2001



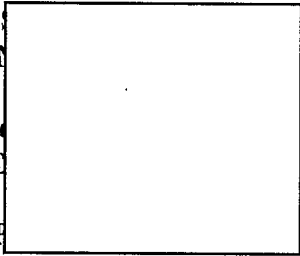
"As you may know, our government has been generally supportive of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. In the future, would you like to see our government strengthen its support for the Taliban, reduce its support, or maintain its support for the Taliban at about the same level as now?"

- Favored by a wide margin increasing support for Mullah Omar's regime. (46%, up from 38% last June)
- Saw the Taleban more favorably than it had before the September 11 attacks (52%, up nearly 20 points since last June).
- Believed by a sizable majority that the Taleban are not a threat to stability in the region and that Pakistan's ties with the Taleban are good.

Drafted: INR/R
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Cleared: INR St
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Approved: INR/E



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File Name: 011107 Taleban in Pakistan