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Case Number:

PTQ1578

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ACTION SA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CA-02	CIAE-00	OASY-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EUR-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-02	LAB-01
	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03
	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SCT-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/028W			

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O 060840Z SEP 95
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4825
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY RIYADH
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 008185

LONDON FOR POL:TUELLER; ROME FOR POL:STORELLA; PARIS FOR
POL:ALLEGRONE

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 E.O. 12356: DECL:09/06/00
 TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PINS, IR, AF
 SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: HEAVY FIGHTING RAGES WEST OF KABUL;
 - HERAT CALM AFTER TALIBAN TAKE-OVER

1. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT.

HERAT SITUATION

2. AFTER TAKING HERAT SEPTEMBER 4, THE TALIBAN ISSUED A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT DECLARING A THREE-DAY HOLIDAY AND URGING RESIDENTS TO REMAIN CALM. THE CITY IS REPORTEDLY PEACEFUL, WITH U.N. OFFICIALS LEAVING HERAT FOR MASHHAD -- NOT BECAUSE OF THE SECURITY SITUATION BUT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE IMPROMPTU HOLIDAY. ISMAEL KHAN, ACCOMPANIED BY BETWEEN 300-600 OF HIS FOLLOWERS, IS SAID TO HAVE LEFT TAYBAT FOR MASHHAD. IRANIAN BORDER OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, DISARMED THE FLEEING GOVERNOR AND HIS ENTOURAGE BEFORE ADMITTING THEM TO THE COUNTRY. KHAN'S RETINUE INCLUDES MEMBERS OF A NEGOTIATING BODY FROM KABUL (DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN AND KEY MASOOD ADVISOR DR. ABDULLAH, SAID NURULLAH, AND OTHERS, ALTHOUGH DR. ABDULLAH HAS NOW RETURNED TO KABUL), WHO WERE CAUGHT BY SURPRISE BY THE SUDDEN TALIBAN ADVANCE INTO HERAT. OTHERS FROM THE GROUP, INCLUDING SIDDIQUE CHAKIRI, PRESIDENT RABBANI'S ECONOMIC ADVISOR, WERE LESS LUCKY AND ARE NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE TALIBAN.

KABUL CONDITIONS

3. TALIBAN FORCES AT MAIDAN SHAHR ATTACK MASOOD'S POSITIONS
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 JUST WEST OF KABUL AT COMPANY, ON THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 5. MASOOD ALSO HAS COUNTER-ATTACKED THE FORMER SAYYAF COMMANDER, SHER ALAM, WHO DEFECTED TO THE TALIBAN TWO DAYS BACK. RABBANI REPORTEDLY CHAIRED AN EMERGENCY MEETING ON THE AFTERNOON OF

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SEPTEMBER 5 TO DISCUSS HOW THE KABUL GOVERNMENT SHOULD REACT TO THE LOSS OF HERAT. KABUL ENVOY MASOOD KHALILI TOLD POLOFF SEPTEMBER 6 THAT RABBANI REMAINS SUPPORTIVE OF A U.N./OIC EFFORT TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS, AND WOULD WELCOME MESTIRI'S PROMPT RETURN TO THE REGION. HOWEVER, KHALILI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE "RABBANI FORMULA" FOR PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION WOULD NOW GIVE A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS TO THE OPPOSITION -- BUT HE INSISTED THAT A "FAIR" SELECTION PROCESS WOULD RETURN A MAJORITY FOR JAMIAT. KHALILI SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT THE KABUL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD ITS OWN MILITARILY, ALTHOUGH HE PREDICTED AN ISMAEL KHAN COUNTER-ATTACK WAS STILL SOME DAYS OFF. AS INDICATION OF THE CURRENT EXCITEMENT OVER THE FALL OF HERAT, A RUMOR SWEEPED ISLAMABAD AFGHAN WATCHER CIRCLES (BOTH JOURNALISTS AND DIPLOMATS) LATE SEPTEMBER 5 THAT FORMER COMMUNIST GENERAL BABA JAN HAD SUCCESSFULLY STAGED A COUP D'ETAT AGAINST RABBANI -- A RUMOR, OF COURSE, WHICH SHORTLY TURNED OUT TO BE FALSE.

ELSEWHERE...

4. HEAVY FIGHTING BY JAMIAT FORCES AGAINST HEKMATYAR COMMANDER ZARDAD RAGED SEPTEMBER 5 AS THE KABUL GOVERNMENT SOUGHT TO SECURE ITS LAND ROUTE TO JALALABAD. HEKMATYAR'S OFFICIALS CLAIM ZARDAD HELD ONTO THE LATABAND ROAD, BUT ADMIT THAT CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES WERE HEAVY -- MORE FIGHTING IS PREDICTED. ZARDAD, MORE OF A BANDIT THAN A COMMANDER, IS
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 NONETHELESS SAID TO BE A GOOD FIGHTER; MOST BET THAT MASOOD WOULD DO BETTER TRYING TO BUY HIM THAN DEFEAT HIM. IN JAMIAT'S HEARTLAND, BADA KHSHAN PROVINCE, PROMINENT COMMANDER BASIR ANNOUNCED HIS DEFECTION TO DOSTAM. JUMBESH OFFICIALS PREDICT THAT THEY WILL SOON TAKE KUNDUZ, BUT THE KABUL GOVERNMENT CLAIMS TO BE HOLDING ITS OWN THERE. FINALLY, U.N. OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT DOSTAM'S FORCES UNDER THE COMMAND OF RASUL PAHLAWAN TOOK TORGHUNDI ON THE TURKMENISTAN BORDER -- JUMBESH HAS INSTRUCTED PAHLAWAN TO AVOID CONTACT WITH THE TALIBAN AND UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES TO ENGAGE THEM.

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5. LATE BREAKING NEWS . . . : THE PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTRY SAYS IT IS RECEIVING INITIAL REPORTS THAT AN ANGRY CROWD OF DEMONSTRATORS IN KABUL HAS CONVERGED ON THE PAKISTANI EMBASSY AND HAS SET FIRE TO THE BUILDING. MFA DIRECTOR FOR AFGHANISTAN, M. NAEEN KHAN, SAYS HE CANNOT GET THROUGH TO THE EMBASSY (NOT A GOOD SIGN) AND CONFIRMS THAT THE AMBASSADOR, A SECOND SECRETARY AND THE DEFENSE ATTACHE, AS WELL AS SUPPORT STAFF, ARE IN RESIDENCE IN KABUL AT THIS TIME. THE U.N. SAYS ITS OFFICIALS REPORT AN ANGRY MOB OF SEVERAL HUNDRED CONVERGING IN THE AREA OF THE PAKISTANI EMBASSY, CHANTING SLOGANS BLAMING ISLAMABAD FOR THE FALL OF HERAT. SMOKE IS SAID TO BE RISING IN THE VICINITY OF THE PAK EMBASSY, BUT THE U.N. CANNOT CONFIRM

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	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/028W			

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 008185

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AFP REPORTS THAT BOTH THE PAK AND ADJACENT BRITISH MISSIONS
HAVE BEEN SET ALIGHT, NOR DO THEY HAVE INFORMATION ON THE PRESS
REPORTING OF THREE INJURED PAKISTANI OFFICIALS. WE WILL KEEP
THE DEPARTMENT INFORMED AS WE GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

COMMENT

6. THE SITUATION REMAINS VERY FLUID, WITH INDIVIDUAL
COMMANDERS ATTEMPTING TO ASSESS WHO HAS THE UPPER HAND, AND

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WHEN TO SWITCH SIDES. THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE SHIFTS REMAINS TO BE SEEN, ALTHOUGH THEY DO ADD TO THE OPPOSITION'S MORALE BOOST. THERE ARE SOME INITIAL INDICATIONS OF DIVISIONS BETWEEN MASOOD AND RABBANI, AS WELL AS MASOOD AND DR. ABDUR-RAHMAN AND GENERAL FAHIM -- THESE MAY INCREASE AS PRESSURE ON THE KABUL GOVERNMENT MOUNTS. THE BOTTOM LINE, HOWEVER, REMAINS THAT MASOOD'S MILITARY REMAINS THE MOST CAPABLE FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN -- WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN SHAKEN UP ENOUGH TO CAVE TO THE TALIBAN IS STILL IN DOUBT. MONJO

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