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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TO: Doug Feith  
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld  
SUBJECT: Strategy

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: JUL 20 2010

*11/1/01  
Revised by [unclear] presented  
@ [unclear] 11/1*

Here are some edits to the "U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan." It is a pretty good paper. Please take a look at the additions and changes. Mark them in bold type, do your own edit, and then I want to send it to some folks.

Here is a draft memo to send it with to the Vice President with copies to Colin Powell, Condi Rice and George Tenet:

*Attached is a revision of the paper entitled "U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan." It seems to me that it is useful to update this from time to time.*

Thanks.

Attach.  
10/16/01 memo, "U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan"

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Please respond by \_\_\_\_\_

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Approved at  
NSC meeting  
10/16/01

October 16, 2001  
7:43 AM

**SUBJECT: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan**

All elements of U.S. strategy must be integrated-military, diplomatic, covert, humanitarian, financial, etc..

1. U.S. Goals re: Al-Qaida

- Eliminate Al-Qaida leadership and forces.
- Deal with Al-Qaida in a manner that clearly signals the rest of the world that terrorists and terrorism will be punished *and (offered)*.
- Collect intelligence for the worldwide campaign against terrorism.

2. Goals re: Taliban

- Terminate the rule of the Taliban and their leadership.
- End the use of Afghanistan as a sanctuary for terrorism.
- Do so in a manner that signals the world that harboring terrorism will be punished severely.
- *Collect intelligence to help in the worldwide campaign against terrorism*
- Take steps to contribute to a more stable post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Note: The U.S. should be involved in the diplomatic effort, but it is not ~~within~~ *in* U.S. power to assure a specific outcome. U.S. preference for a specific outcome ought not paralyze U.S. efforts to oust Al-Qaida and the Taliban. The U.S. should not commit to any post-Taliban military involvement, since the U.S. will be heavily engaged in the anti-terrorism effort worldwide. *The US needs to be involved in this effort to ensure that our coalition partners are not disaffected*

3. Execution

- Al-Qaida's and the Taliban's main assets are people. They must be destroyed.

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- Use any and all Afghan tribes and factions to eliminate Al-Qaida and Taliban personnel and military capabilities.
- DoD and CIA <sup>work</sup> coordinate closely in getting all factions engaged in eliminating Al-Qaida and Taliban; by the use of incentives and disincentives-money, food, military equipment, supplies, air strikes, etc.

4. Operations

OSD 1.4 (b)

- <sup>We need - many more</sup> ~~Urgently~~ Insert additional CIA teams and Special Forces in country operational detachments (A teams), by any means, both in the North and the South. ~~Add~~ third country special forces if appropriate (UK, ~~██████████~~ ~~██████████~~ Australia, New Zealand, etc.) <sup>Should be inserted as soon as possible.</sup>
- CIA and DoD teams on the ground are critical for success-U.S. influence, targeting, logistics and humanitarian efforts.
- Ground liaison teams should urge Afghan ground forces:
  - In the North, in this order, to:
    - Establish a land bridge to Uzbekistan by attacking and occupying land and major cities.
    - Eliminate Al-Qaida, Taliban and Arab forces to the north and northeast.
    - Move toward Kabul and, to the extent possible, threaten ~~or surround~~ <sup>or occupy</sup> Kabul, while making pronouncements about a shared government with other key elements.
    - Sever Taliban lines of command, northwest and northeast of Kabul.
  - In the South and West to:
    - Move against Al-Qaida and Taliban forces and strongholds throughout the country.
- U.S. military and coalition forces will:

The US should prepare for a major coalition ground effort to take  
Kabul, but with the goal of bringing the Taliban  
into a coalition with the US.

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- Closely coordinate with forces on the ground to achieve the military goals.
- CINCENT will use all capabilities to encourage ground forces to achieve U.S. goals:
  - Attack from the air enemy capabilities, to facilitate success of Afghan forces on the ground.
  - Provide money, equipment, food, etc.
  - Provide equipment.
  - Provide food.

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5. Other

- Establish secure air and land supply routes in the North and South, so aid can be focused on opposition forces, rather than in Taliban-occupied areas.
- Build humanitarian supply routes and centers to help the US oppose the Taliban.

6. Kabul

Providing additional conventional support to Northern Alliance forces north of Kabul (the vicinity of Panshir and the Shomali plains) may set conditions for Northern Alliance to eliminate Taliban resistance in Kabul and take the city.

- The USG should not agonize over post-Taliban arrangements to the point that it delays success over Al Qaida and the Taliban. The sooner the Taliban is pushed out of Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and other key cities, the better. However, without slowing down the Northern Alliance's advance, the USG should begin discussing international arrangements for the administration of Kabul to relieve Pashtun fear of domination by Northern Alliance (Tajik-Uzbek) tribes.
- Engaging U.N. diplomacy too early beyond intent and general outline could interfere with U.S. military operations and inhibit coalition freedom of action. Diplomacy can be most useful:

1) Occupying Mazarshad and Herat, and  
2) Occupying Kabul.  
3) Occupying Herat, Mazarshad, and  
4) Getting the Taliban into the coalition.

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- 1) bilaterally, particularly with Pakistan, but also with Iran and Russia, to reinforce our messages to the Northern Alliance and to Southern Pashtuns (see below);
  - 2) to enlist commitments from key allies and Muslim countries for a follow-on peacekeeping force for Kabul.
- An international group could be UN-based or an ad hoc collection of volunteer states (such as Turkey, [redacted] and Egypt, along with other NATO allies), but not the U.S. The U.S. will have a ~~small~~ deal of work to do in the rest of the world.

*mil/boy*      *not boy*  
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7. The South

It is critical that CIA and DoD speed up the process of establishing on-the-ground contacts in the South as well as the North. Pakistan could be key in this regard, particularly if the U.S. emphasizes to them that this is the key to balancing gains by the Northern Alliance. The U.S. should explore the value of ties with King Zahir Shah. He may have some influence with Pashtuns, particularly if he is seen to have the confidence of the U.S. The U.S. should be wary of associating closely with the still hated Russians or the Iranians, given Pashtun fear of domination by Iranian-backed Shia.

8. Message to Southern Tribes

The message to Southern tribes should emphasize the importance of joining the U.S. if they wish to balance the Northern Alliance:

- The U.S. is prepared to give them the same support it is giving Northern groups if they will join with the US.
- U.S. actions in the North demonstrate that the U.S. is able and willing to support its friends.
- The U.S. is committed to preserving Kabul as a capital for all Afghans, not one dominated by the Northern Alliance.

9. Message for the Northern Alliance

- The U.S. goal is to help Afghans drive out the foreign terrorists, defeat the Taliban and help Afghans regain control over their land and people.

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- The U.S. will provide support to accomplish those goals: coordinated air strikes with ground movement, ammunition, supplies and food.
- Long-term, the U.S. and its allies are prepared to provide economic support for reconstruction within an all-Afghan political framework.
- It is crucial that their forces conduct themselves humanely and professionally toward the civilian population. Atrocities will damage their cause. U.S. support depends on their dealing severely with breaches of professional conduct.
- The U.S. must also ally with anti-Taliban forces in the South. This means the future of Kabul should be decided by a political process, and not by military action alone. The U.S. expects them to declare, as soon possible, that their goal is not to establish dominion over the entire country, but to get a political process started that will reflect the interests of all the Afghan peoples.
- The U.S. envisions some kind of international security arrangement for Kabul and the surrounding area in which a political process could take place. The U.S. envisions a highly capable peacekeeping force drawn from allies in Europe, the Muslim world and elsewhere to help to secure Kabul until stability is achieved.
- The U.S. will consult on its plans for moving on Kabul. It may be wise to encourage the Taliban to surrender the city without the Northern Alliance forces having to invest and occupy it by force, possibly by surrounding the city and introducing a capable peacekeeping force.

Timing

The President has properly prepared the American public for a long campaign. However, it would be helpful to achieve some decisive results relatively early:

- An early defeat of Taliban/Al Qaida will make it more difficult for them to conduct additional terrorist operations.
- Making an example of the Taliban increases U.S. leverage on other state supporters of terrorism.

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- There will undoubtedly be intense diplomatic activity once winter slows down military operations. That diplomacy must operate against a background of U.S. success or it will inhibit U.S. actions.
- Success will build U.S. public confidence for action in other theaters.
- Success will maintain the support of key coalition members; protracted fighting may achieve the opposite.
- However, early successes may not be possible, and expectations should be kept to realistic levels.