

(U) PRC/Taleban: The Locals Are Friendly?

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(S//NF) A PRC foreign ministry official in mid-January met in Islamabad with Taleban Foreign Minister Mutawakil [redacted]

[redacted] the foreign ministry, and other offices, a fact-finding team from a PRC think tank recommended holding regular bilateral exchanges and rebuilding Afghanistan's roads and telecommunications. The team noted negative PRC perceptions of the Taleban derived from misleading western and Russian sources; it accepted Taleban assertions that "Xinjiang dissidents" are training to fight anti-Taleban factions inside Afghanistan and are not targeting China.

B1
1.4(C)
1.4(D)

(S//NF) **Comment:** The encounters are indicative of broadening PRC-Taleban engagement. Evidence of growing commercial contacts includes the presence of PRC telecommunications firms--the same ones implicated in the Iraq controversy--which last year signed protocols to install digital phone systems in Kandahar and Kabul.

[redacted]

B1
1.4(C)
1.4(D)

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