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ACTION SCT-00

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| INFO | LOG-00  | ACDA-08 | ACDE-00 | INLB-01 | AID-00  | A-00    | ACQ-01  |
|      | CA-02   | CCO-00  | CG-00   | CIAE-00 | SMEC-00 | COME-00 | CTME-00 |
|      | INL-01  | DOEE-00 | DOTE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00   | EAP-01  | EB-00   |
|      | EUR-01  | FAAE-00 | FBIE-00 | FBO-01  | H-01    | IMMC-01 | IM-01   |
|      | TEDE-00 | INR-00  | INSE-00 | IO-00   | LAB-01  | L-01    | ADS-00  |
|      | MMP-00  | M-00    | NEA-01  | DCP-01  | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | OCS-03  |
|      | OIC-02  | OIS-01  | OMB-01  | OPIC-01 | OPR-01  | PA-00   | PM-00   |
|      | PRS-00  | P-00    | SP-00   | SSO-00  | SVC-00  | TRSE-00 | T-00    |
|      | USIE-00 | USSS-00 | SA-01   | ASDS-01 | IMCC-01 | SNIS-00 | NISC-00 |
|      | SGHD-00 | PMB-00  | DSCC-00 | PRM-01  | DRL-04  | G-00    | MR-00   |
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O 261515Z AUG 98  
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9557  
 INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
 USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
 AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE  
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
 DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
 NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
 AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE  
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY

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 AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY  
 AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
 COMUSNAVCENT //POLAD, IMMEDIATE  
 USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPB J5//  
 USMISSION GENEVA  
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
 AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
 AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
 AMEMBASSY ALMATY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 006448

DEPT FOR SA/PAB, DS, CA, AND S/CT.; LONDON FOR A/S INDERFURTH, AND  
AMBASSADORS MILAM AND SIMONS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/26/08

TAGS: PGOV, ASEC, MOPS, PTER, PK, AF

SUBJECT: SITREP 7: PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN REACTION TO U.S.  
STRIKES

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| REFS: (A) ISLAMABAD 6433 | (E) PESHAWAR 638   |
| - (B) ISLAMABAD 6398     | (F) ISLAMABAD 6351 |
| - (C) ISLAMABAD 6360     | (G) ISLAMABAD 6350 |
| - (D) ISLAMABAD 6353     | (H) ISLAMABAD 6329 |

(U) CLASSIFIED BY ALAN EASTHAM, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES. REASON  
1.5(D).

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1. (U) THIS MESSAGE WAS COORDINATED WITH CONSULATES KARACHI, LAHORE, AND PESHAWAR.
2. (C) THE FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY'S SEVENTH SITUATION REPORT (7:00 P.M. LOCAL; 10:00 A.M. EST) ON PAKISTANI/AFGHAN REACTION TO THE AUGUST 20 U.S. STRIKES ON THE TERRORIST NETWORK OF USAMA BIN LADEN. (NOTE: SEE REPTELS FOR PREVIOUS SITREPS.)

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SECURITY SITUATION  
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3. (C) AS HAS BEEN THE CASE FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, PAKISTAN APPEARS BASICALLY CALM. ASIDE FROM SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS, ISLAMABAD WAS VERY QUIET. CONSULATE KARACHI REPORTED THAT KARACHI AND QUETTA WERE QUIET. A [REDACTED] SOURCE IN QUETTA TOLD POLOFF THAT THE AFGHAN COMMUNITY THERE WAS NOT GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE EFFORTS OF SOME MUSLIM EXTREMISTS TO FOMENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE U.S.

B1

4. (C) CONSULATE LAHORE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE CITY ON AUGUST 25 (SEE LAHORE SEPTTEL), BUT THE SITUATION WAS QUIET ON AUGUST 26. LAHORE PO COMMENTED THAT IT APPEARED THAT MOST PAKISTANIS ARE FOCUSED ON DAY-TO-DAY CONCERNS; IT IS ONLY THE EXTREMISTS WHO ARE AT ALL WORKED UP. [REDACTED] REPORTED THAT HE HAD NO REPORTS OF PROBLEMS IN PESHAWAR OR OTHER PARTS OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] TOLD CONOFF TODAY HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT NOTHING HAD REALLY CHANGED AMONG THE GENERAL PAKISTANI PUBLIC FOLLOWING THE AUGUST 20 MISSILE STRIKES. HE SAID MOST PAKISTANIS  
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STILL HAD A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF THE U.S. AND AMEQS. HE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT "RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS" AND OTHER "FANATICS" (HE CITED THE JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI AND HARAKAT UL ANSAR AS EXAMPLES) COULD POSE A DANGER TO AMERICANS. THIS (#) PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, WHERE PEOPLE TEND TO BE MORE RELIGIOUS, LESS EDUCATED AND MORE RIGID IN THEIR THINKING.

5. (U) EMBASSY KABUL ONCE AGAIN REPORTED THE CITY QUIET ON AUGUST 26.

6. (C) ATTENTION IS NOW FOCUSED ON SCHEDULED AUGUST 27-28 DEMONSTRATIONS IN VARIOUS CITIES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS WILL TRY HARD TO WORK THEIR FOLLOWERS INTO A FEVER PITCH TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR POLITICAL CLOUT. HOWEVER, THE OVERALL IMPRESSION REMAINS THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT INTENDS, AND IS ABLE, TO CONTROL ANY DEMONSTRATIONS LIKELY TO ARISE. THE BASIC FEELING IS THAT IF PAKISTAN CAN GET THROUGH THE SECOND FRIDAY PRAYER DAY WITHOUT UNDUE INCIDENT, THEN THE DANGER OF SERIOUS DEMONSTRATIONS WILL HAVE PASSED. FOR EXAMPLE, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF THAT HE KNOWS SOME FAMILIES WHO LEFT PAKISTAN RIGHT AFTER THE STRIKES WHO ARE USING THE "TWO FRIDAY RULE" AS THE GUIDEPOST ON WHEN TO RETURN, I.E., IF THINGS ARE CALM UP TO AND ON AUGUST 28, THEY CAN SAFELY RETURN.

(##) GARBLED TEXT CORRECTIONS WILL FOLLOW

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|      | MMP-00  | M-00    | NEA-01  | DGP-01  | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | OCS-03  |
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| USSS-00 | SA-01   | ASDS-01 | IMCC-01 | SNIS-00 | NISC-00 | SGHD-00 |
| PMB-00  | DSCC-00 | PRM-01  | DRL-04  | G-00    | MR-00   | NFAT-00 |
| SAS-00  | /040W   |         |         |         |         |         |

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O 261515Z AUG 98  
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9558  
 INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
 USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
 AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE  
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 COMUSNAVCENT //POLAD, IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 006448

DEPT FOR SA/PAB, DS, CA, AND S/CT; LONDON FOR A/S INDERFURTH, AND  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/26/08  
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 SUBJECT: SITREP 7: PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN REACTION TO U.S.  
 STRIKES

7: (C) WE ARE EXPECTING A SUBSTANTIAL DEMONSTRATION AT MID-DAY  
AUGUST 27, SPONSORED BY THE YOUTH WING OF THE JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI

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WHICH, ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES, COULD TURN OUT A CROWD  
 NUMBERED IN THE THOUSANDS. POLICE PREPARATIONS ARE WELL IN HAND.  
 FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH THE ORGANIZERS TODAY, POLICE ADVISE THAT  
 THE DEMONSTRATION WILL BE HELD A SUBSTANTIAL DISTANCE FROM THE  
 EMBASSY (NEARER THE FRENCH THAN WE, IN FACT) AND A HALF-DOZEN  
 DEMONSTRATORS WILL BE ESCORTED TO THE EMBASSY TO PRESENT A  
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 PETITION, WHICH A SECURITY OFFICER WILL ACCEPT. WE EXPECT TO  
 SEND ALL BUT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL SECURITY PERSONNEL HOME UNTIL  
 THE DEMONSTRATION IS OVER AND WILL SAFEHAVEN THE COMPOUND-  
 DWELLERS OUTSIDE THE WALLS.

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 PAKISTAN  
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8. (C) IN THE WAKE OF REPORTS FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES DURING  
 THE PAST TWO DAYS THAT VC JCS GEN JOHN RALSTON WAS IN PAKISTAN  
 MEETING SENIOR GOP MILITARY LEADERS DURING THE EVENING OF AUGUST  
 20, THE GOP MILITARY PRESS OFFICE (INTERSERVICES PUBLIC RELATIONS  
 DIRECTORATE) RELEASED ITS OWN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON HIS PRESENCE  
 THE EVENING OF THE AIR STRIKES. THE STATEMENT IS CLEARLY AIMED  
 AT ACCOUNTING FOR THE ALLEGED PRESENCE OF GEN RALSTON IN PAKISTAN  
 ON THE EVENING OF THE NIGHT IN QUESTION IN A WAY THAT SEEMS  
 PLAUSIBLE, YET MAKES CLEAR THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT HAD NO  
 FOREKNOWLEDGE OF OR CONDONED IN ANY WAY THE U.S. ATTACK.

9. (U) ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT (TEXT REPORTED REFTTEL) GEN  
 RALSTON REQUESTED PERMISSION TO MAKE A BRIEF STOPOVER AT  
 ISLAMABAD AIRPORT ON AUGUST 20 IN RESPONSE TO PAKISTANI INQUIRIES  
 TO CENTCOM ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF U.S. SHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL  
 WATERS OFF THE PAKISTAN COAST. RALSTON ARRIVED AT 7:30 PM AND  
 DEPARTED AT 10:30 PM. GEN RALSTON REPORTEDLY TOLD HIS PAKISTANI  
 MILITARY INTERLOCUTOR, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF KARAMAT, THAT THE  
 SHIPS IN QUESTION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PAKISTAN AND WERE  
 PROBABLY THERE FOR ACTION BEING CONTEMPLATED AGAINST TERRORIST  
 CAMPS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE STATEMENT GOES ON TO SAY THAT GENERAL  
 KARAMAT BROUGHT THE MATTER IMMEDIATELY TO THE ATTENTION OF THE  
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 PRIME MINISTER WHILE ALSO INDICATING TO GEN RALSTON THAT SUCH AN  
 ACTION BY THE U.S. WAS UNWARRANTED. SINCE THE ATTACK CAME THAT  
 VERY NIGHT, THE STATEMENT CONCLUDES THAT GEN RALSTON HAD ARRANGED  
 TO BE IN PAKISTAN SO THAT, IF THE ATTACK WAS DETECTED BY  
 PAKISTANI AIR DEFENSES, HE WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CLARIFY WHAT  
 WAS TAKING PLACE.

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10. (C) THIS STORY ASIDE, THE PAKISTANI PRESS IS BEGINNING TO RETURN IN EARNEST TO OTHER MATTERS, WITH THE TALKS IN LONDON AND U.S. SUPPORT FOR AN EARLY PAKISTAN-IMF ACCORD TAKING THE LION'S SHARE OF THE HEADLINES TODAY.

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AFGHANISTAN  
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11. (C) TALIBAN "SOFTENING" ON TALKS WITH U.S.?: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 26 THAT THE AFGHAN ISLAMIC PRESS (AIP) WAS URGING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS NOT TO REPORT THAT THE TALIBAN HAD "REJECTED" TALKS WITH THE U.S. (NOTE: ON AUGUST 25, TALIBAN LEADER OMAR WAS SAID TO HAVE REJECTED A U.S. OFFER FOR TALKS -- SEE REF A.) AIP SAID THE ACTUAL TERM OMAR HAD USED IN AN AUGUST 24 INTERVIEW WAS "THE TALIBAN WERE NOT IN FAVOR" OF TALKS. [REDACTED] WENT ON TO SPECULATE THAT THIS MIGHT REPRESENT A "SOFTENING" IN THE TALIBAN'S POSITION ON TALKS. IN A

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
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RELATED DEVELOPMENT, /

[REDACTED] REPORTED TO POLOFF THAT LATE ON AUGUST 25 BBC RADIO'S  
PASHTU SERVICE INTERVIEWED OMAR ASSISTANT WAKIL AHMED, WHO  
CLAIMED THE TALIBAN HAVE RECEIVED "A LETTER" FROM THE U.S.  
EMBASSY IN ISLAQIL AHMED SAID HE COULD NOT REVEAL THE  
CONTENTS OF THE LETTER. HOWEVER, THE LETTER'S CLAIMS ABOUT BIN  
LADIN WERE "TOO GENERAL" IN THE TALIBAN'S VIEW. IN ANY CASE,  
WAKIL SAID THE TALIBAN DID NOT WANT TALKS WITH THE U.S. BECAUSE  
OF THE MISSILE STRIKES. THE SUBSTANCE OF [REDACTED] REPORT WAS  
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LATER CONFIRMED IN AUGUST 26 PAKISTANI NEWSPAPER REPORTS, WHICH  
SAID THE TALIBAN HAD A LETTER FROM THE U.S. AND WERE REVIEWING  
ITS CONTENTS. (NOTE: AUGUST 26 PAKISTANI NEWSPAPERS QUOTED MFA  
AFGHAN GURU AS SAYING THAT THE GOP WOULD WELCOME ANY TALIBAN/U.S.  
TALKS.)

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12. (C) UN ON AFGHANISTAN: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 26 THAT THE UN WAS CLOSELY MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. SINCE LAST WEEK'S SHOOTING OF A UN EXPAT, AND ATTACKS ON FACILITIES IN HERAT AND JALALABAD, THE TALIBAN NOW APPEAR TO BE PROTECTING UN SITES. UN AIRCRAFT WERE STILL FLYING TO AFGHAN POINTS, BRINGING SUPPLIES TO OFFICES, WHICH WERE STAFFED BY AFGHAN EMPLOYEES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT UN SECURITY OFFICIALS WILL TRAVEL TO KABUL ON SEPTEMBER 1 TO CHECK ON THE SITUATION THERE. IF IT IS CALM, [REDACTED] SOME UN EXPATS MAY RETURN. (NOTE: ICRC REPORTEDLY IS ALLOWING SOME EXPAT STAFF TO RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN. ITS AIRCRAFT CONTINUE TO FLY TO AFGHAN POINTS.)

13. (C) FALL OFF IN PRESS INQUIRIES: PAO REPORTED THAT HE IS RECEIVING FEWER PRESS INQUIRIES ABOUT THE U.S. STRIKES, AFTER RECEIVING A DELUGE OF QUERIES IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE STRIKES. MANY CAMERA TEAMS FROM THE NETWORKS ARE PREPARING TO LEAVE ISLAMABAD.

14. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

EASTHAM

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