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**TO: CHRISTINA ROCCA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**FROM: RICHARD B. SCOTT - U.S.A.I.D. /AFGHANISTAN (RETIRED)
2598 BIG THOMPSON
DRAKE, CO 80515**

**TEL/FAX:
ALT. FAX:
E-MAIL:**

**SUBJECT: UNSOLICITED COMMENT ON OUR POLICIES TOWARD THE
TALIBAN OF AFGHANISTAN: A REPEAT OF AN EARLIER SUGGESTION**

**WITH THE RISE TO POWER OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN, A
SEMBLANCE OF ORDER RETURNED AFTER SOME 15 YEARS OF WAR
AND VIRTUAL ANARCHY. HOWEVER, OUR MIS-GUIDED POLICIES
TOWARD THE TALIBAN HAVE BEEN REJECTING, INSULTING,
ISOLATING, THREATING AND UNPRODUCTIVE. IT IS PAST TIME TO
CHANGE THESE POLICIES TO SOMETHING BASED ON ENGAGEMENT,
POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE TALIBAN IN SOLVING
MUTUAL PROBLEMS, LIKE BIN LADEN AND TERRORISM. THE
PASHTUNS (MOST TALIBAN ARE PASHTUNS) HAVE A LONG TRADITION
OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO MUTUAL PROBLEMS THROUGH A PROCESS
OF EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS RESULTING IN A CONSENSUS AND
ACTION. ON SEVERAL PAST OCCASIONS, MULLAH OMER HAD
SUGGESTED THAT WE SIT AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE TO ADDRESS
OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS. WITH PASHTUNS, THIS CANNOT BE
ACCOMPLISHED IN A DAY-VISIT FROM PAKISTAN BUT WITH A
CONTINUOUS PRESENCE, ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS, TRUST AND
UNDERSTANDING THROUGH DIALOGUE AND ACTION.**

**TO DATE, IN MY OPINION, WE HAVE NOT SERIOUSLY ATTEMPTED AN
EXTENDED, PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE TALIBAN. TO SOME
LIMITED DEGREE, THE SHOCK AND TRAGEDY OF THE ATTACKS ON
AMERICA AND POLITICAL DEMAND FOR REVENGE AIMED AT THE
TALIBAN ARE THE RESULT OF OUR MIS-GUIDED POLICIES AND OUR
APPARENT INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE TRYING TO
COMMUNICATE WITH IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR LIMITED CONTACTS.
OUR INTERACTIONS HAVE BEEN MOSTLY THE RESULT OF RESPONSES**

TO TALIBAN ACTIONS, SUCH AS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BAMIYAN BUDDA STATUES AND THE ARREST OF THE SHELTER NOW (NGO) MISSIONARIES. OUR INTERACTIONS WITH THE TALIBAN HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY CONDEMNING, CRITICAL, INSULTING AND THREATENING. PASHTUNS DO NOT RESPOND WELL TO THREATS AND VIOLENCE EVEN WHEN THEY ARE ILL PREPARED TO DEFEND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A CIVIL WAR AND DURING THE WORSE DROUGHT IN LIVING MEMORY. ASK THE RUSSIANS. I WILL BE SURPRISED IF THE TALIBAN RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE 3-DAY ULTIMATUM DELIVERED FOR US BY THE PAKISTANIS, EVEN THOUGH THE LARGER GROUP OF ULEMA CLERICS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION.

I DO NOT CONSIDER THE TALIBAN OUR ENEMY, BUT IT APPEARS THAT OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO MAKE THEM OUR ENEMY. OUR POLICIES HAVE CERTAINLY DONE NOTHING TO SUGGEST AN OPEN MIND. OUR POLICIES SAY TO THEM THAT THE TALIBAN CAN DO NOTHING RIGHT.

MULLAH OMER ABOLISHED OPIUM POPPY PRODUCTION IN THE COUNTRY THAT PRODUCED SOME 75 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S ILLEGAL OPIUM. AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR WE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO HELP THE FARMERS IN THIS TRANSITION TO OTHER CROPS AND JUST BARELY ACKNOWLEDGED THE FACT OF THE BAN. IT IS PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTION IN NARCOTICS CONTROL IN HISTORY AND DID NOT INVOLVE OUTSIDE HELP IN FUNDING, POLICE TRAINING, BRIBES OR WEAPONRY. AND WE, AS PERHAPS THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONSUMER OF ILLEGAL OPIUM, HAVE DONE NOTHING TO SUPPORT THE BAN.

THE TALIBAN ARE NOT TRAINED OR EXPERIENCED DIPLOMATS, BUREAUCRATS OR TECHNOCRATS. MOST HAVE LITTLE OR NO UNDERSTANDING OF OR EXPERIENCE IN THE WEST. THEY ARE MOSTLY MEN TRAINED IN RELIGION WITH SMALL TOWN AND RURAL VALUES. OUR LIBERAL VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH SEX AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE CONSIDERED IMMORAL. THEY DO NOT THINK LIKE US. WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT THEM TO ACT LIKE US. THEY ARE NOT AMERICANS THAT SIMPLY SPEAK A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE. BUT IN MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE TALIBAN OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, THEY DID NOT LIE, UNLIKE PREVIOUS AFGHAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. IF THEY TRUST YOU, THEY LISTEN. THEY ALWAYS TELL YOU WHAT THEY THINK.

IN PREVIOUS FAXES TO STATE DEPARTMENT, I HAVE OUTLINED THE TRADITIONAL NATURE OF THE SANTUARY GIVEN BIN LADEN AS DEFINED IN *PASHTUNWALI*, PASHTUN TRADITIONAL LAW. IT HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE U.S. MEDIA'S "WELCOMED GUEST" CONCEPT.

GIVEN THE YEARS AND PERSONAL FORTUNE BIN LADEN HAS INVESTED IN AFGHANISTAN, MOSTLY AGAINST THE RUSSIANS, HE IS NOT CONSIDERED AN ENEMY OF THAT COUNTRY.

WE HAVE HAD A LONG AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AFGHANS BEGINNING IN 1946 WHEN MORRISON-KNUTSEN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OF BOISE, IDAHO BUILT THE LARGEST IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY. WE SUPPORTED THEM AGAINST THE RUSSIANS FOR SOME 10 YEARS THAT HELPED TO END THE COLD WAR AND THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION. INSTEAD OF HELPING WITH A NEGOTIATED UNIFICATION OF THE ETHNIC GROUPS, WE TURNED OUR BACKS ON AFGHANISTAN IN ANARCHY. THE TALIBAN HAVE BROUGHT SOME ORDER BACK TO MOST OF THE COUNTRY IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY POSSIBLE UNIFYING CONCEPT LEFT TO THEM, ISLAM. AFGHANISTAN IS A TRIBAL SOCIETY WITH VERY WEAK CONCEPTS OF NATIONALISM EXCEPT AMONG THE URBAN ELITE, MOST OF WHO NOW LIVE IN THE WEST. AMONG THE ETHNIC GROUPS OF AFGHANISTAN, "AFGHAN" MEANS "PASHTUN", THE LARGEST OF THE ETHNIC GROUPS.

THE AFGHANS, INCLUDING THE TALIBAN, ARE NOT OUR ENEMIES. THROUGH OUR LONG ASSOCIATION THERE, WE STILL HAVE MANY GOOD FRIENDS AND SOME RESPECT. IN MY OPINION, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, DUMB, TO INITIATE ANY MAJOR RETALIATORY ATTACK ON AFGHANISTAN WHEN WE CAN ATTAIN OUR GOALS THROUGH A MAJOR CHANGE OF POLICY AND DIALOGUE.

A REVENGE ATTACK BY THE GREATEST MILITARY FORCE IN THE WORLD AGAINST BASICALLY A HELPLESS COUNTRY AND PEOPLE WOULD BE EASY BUT IT WILL GAIN US LITTLE BEYOND MORE ENEMIES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND SERVE A TEMPORARY POLITICAL NEED AT HOME.

WHAT I HAVE SAID HERE IS KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD AMONG PERHAPS MANY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, BUT IT DOES NOT FIT WITH OUR PRESENT FOREIGN POLICIES. IT IS NOT THE SIMPLEST APPROACH TO SOLVING SOME OF OUR PRESENT DILEMMA. IT INVOLVES ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH A GOVERNMENT THAT WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE NOR THAT WE HAVE SHOWN ANY RESPECT FOR. BUT IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH A BIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

I OFFER MY SERVICES TO HELP ACCOMPLISH WHAT I HAVE SUGGESTED IN THIS COMMUNICATION AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUE NOTED HERE WITH ANYONE INTERESTED IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT IMPASS. I HAVE BEEN

ASSOCIATED WITH AFGHANISTAN OFF AND ON FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS BY MY OWN CHOICE. THE AFGHANS ARE UNIQUE, NOT ALWAYS LIKEABLE BUT UNIQUE. I LIKE THEM. WE DO NOT HAVE TO KILL THEM OVER BIN LADEN. WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS THROUGH NEGOTIATION AND A MAJOR CHANGE OF POLICY, NOT THREATS AND VIOLENCE.

P.S. IF BIN LADEN OFFERS TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN SECRETLY, AS HE DID 3 YEARS AGO, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT WE ACCEPT THE OFFER. HE WILL BE EASIER TO GET ON THE RUN THAN IN AFGHANISTAN. YOU DO NOT SHOOT QUAIL WHEN THEY ARE IN THE BRUSH.