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November 10, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FROM GEN ABIZAID

Mr. Secretary:

We continue to progress well towards our objective of standing up the first eight Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan by end of December, 03. I am also pleased that the international community and NATO are both showing greater involvement in this theater. With Germany taking the lead for the PRT in Konduz later this year under NATO control, we see the first manifestations of ISAF expansion, something we have encouraged for some time and continue to support.

Jim Jones and I are committed to working through the command and control challenges associated with ISAF expansion and making NATO's first out of Europe deployment a complete success. The ISAF/CENTCOM Memorandum of Agreement that governs CJTF-180 support requirements is currently being reviewed by a joint team from Allied Command Operations, CENTCOM and the Joint Staff. While I believe we can support the emergency extraction mission for the Konduz PRT with current forces at Bagram, this will become more problematic should ISAF activities proliferate around the country.

To maintain focus on the kill/capture OEF mission, we believe it critical that the ISAF mission work towards increased self-sufficiency over time. This will require NATO to support the mission with additional mobility and quick reaction capabilities. The ability for NATO to support additional missions will be challenged by two factors. Support for the mission in Afghanistan by NATO nations has not been overwhelming as demonstrated by their failure to generate many of the critical force enablers required to execute the ISAF mission in Kabul. Secondly, the extraction mission requires fairly high end capabilities not in abundance in the NATO force structure, which implies that U.S. contributions to that mission will be needed.

These challenges notwithstanding, we should continue to push for NATO to honor its commitments and reach for new missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq. I will work with Jim to ensure the C2 issues are managed, but need your help at the political level pushing for greater involvement by the European nations in these two critical missions.

Copy to: CJCS, Gen Jones

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