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December 9, 2004

TO: President George W. Bush
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld 
SUBJECT: Trip to Afghanistan Inauguration, Kuwait and India
December 5 - 9, 2004

AFGHANISTAN. Attending the inauguration of Hamid Karzai, the first freely elected leader in the 5,000-year history of Afghanistan, was an extraordinary experience. [

In Kabul the Vice President, Zai Khalilzad and I had an upbeat bilateral with President-elect Karzai before his inauguration. He said, "Now life is working. Before the US came to Afghanistan, we were like a still-life picture; when you arrived, everything came to life. With your help, we have come so far." I've attached a slide that captures the progress in Afghanistan.

Much of our discussion focused on dealing with counter-narcotics, the need for an ongoing strategic partnership between our two nations, and the Afghan economy. Karzai is focused on stopping the narcotics trade in his country.

The inauguration was moving. President Karzai's speech pledged his life and honor to serving his native land, and he graciously thanked the US. He hosted a private lunch for the US delegation. It was a day I will never forget. You can be extraordinarily proud of what you have accomplished in Afghanistan. ✓

KUWAIT. The Kuwaiti Prime Minister and Minister of Defense expressed happiness at your re-election and sent along their best wishes to you and your family. On Iraq, the Prime Minister cautioned against reposing too much hope in the long-term chances for peace and stability, given the disparate religious and ethnic factions. He said, "Beheadings are nothing new in Iraq," and that he felt the security situation would deteriorate further after elections. He advised us to get our troops out of the Iraqi cities and get the Iraqi Security Forces fully into the fight. I told him you are strongly against a delay in the elections.

On the Palestinian issue, he spoke hopefully of the chances for a new peace process. He closed by railing against Al-Jazeera, encouraging us to press the Qataris to "slam them hard." His parting comments centered on his desire to

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obtain the release of 14 Kuwaiti detainees; the interagency has reviewed their cases and believes they should not be released in the near future.

INDIA. In India, the genuine warmth of the meetings with all the new top leadership was extraordinary. They were grateful to have the first Cabinet-level visit so quickly after our election. We are clearly at an opportune moment in US-Indian relations to take our relationship – a critical one for the world – to a new level. The Minister of Defense, the Minister of External Affairs, the National Security Advisor, and the Prime Minister – all were on a single sheet of music. Each warmly congratulated you on your re-election and spoke hopefully about your visiting India in the near future. Their key points were a strong desire to deepen and expand defense cooperation; satisfaction with the course of events in Afghanistan; a sincerely expressed hope that Iraq will stabilize soon; and a desire that we not allow our obviously close relationship with Pakistan to create issues with India – particularly with regard to arms sales. ✓

All four, and especially the Prime Minister, spoke hopefully about the Indian-Pakistan relationship and their respect for President Musharraf. Each also emphasized that India's 145 million Muslims are an important force within their country, and that India is the second largest Muslim country in the world. The Prime Minister seems committed to pursuing better relations with Pakistan, saying he could "take Indian popular opinion with me when the time is right."

I left India with a strong sense that relations between our nations have never been better. I hope you will be able to visit India soon. Your presence could further facilitate a rapprochement between India and Pakistan, as well as encourage India to continue on a pro-Western path.

Respectfully,

Enclosure a/s

CC: Vice President Richard B. Cheney
Honorable Colin Powell (by hand)
Honorable Porter Goss
Dr. Condoleezza Rice

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What Has Changed?

July 2003

Counter-terrorist focus
Neutral population
4 x Provincial Reconstruction Teams
Sanctuary
Attacks on the Coalition
Minimal cooperation with
Afghan National Army training
Warlords empowered
Disarmament, Demobilization and
Reintegration (DDR) Concept
No Constitution
No political process
Minimal Afghan Sovereignty

December 2004

Counter-Insurgency focus
Supportive population
19 x Provincial Reconstruction Teams
Sanctuary
Attacks on soft targets
Cooperation & engagement with Pakistan
Afghan National Army fighting now
Warlords diminished
Disarmament, Demobilization and
Reintegration (DDR) underway
Moderate Islamic Constitution
Presidential Election complete
Growing Afghan Sovereignty

6-Dec-04

