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FROM

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CONTROLS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 (b)(3):10 USC 424

SUBJECT: (b)(3):10 USC 424 WARLORDS CLASH IN HERAT -

SUMMARY OF EVENTS 14-22 AUGUST

SERIAL: (U) (b)(3):10 USC 424

/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) AFGHANISTAN (AF)

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WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY  
EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
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SUMMARY: (U) LOCAL WARLORDS THREATEN ((ISMAEL)) KHAN -  
ADVANCE ON HERAT FROM NORTH, SOUTH AND EAST. ((AMANULLAH))  
KHAN SEIZES STRATEGIC SHINDAND AIRPORT BUT STOPS SHORT OF  
HERAT CITY ONLY IN FACE OF COALITION AIRPOWER. TENSE  
CEASE-FIRE CURRENTLY IN EFFECT. KABUL WEIGHS ITS OPTIONS.

TEXT: 1. (U) THIS REPORT PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF RECENT  
ACTIVITY IN THE WESTERN REGION OF AFGHANISTAN AS REPORTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE COALITION PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM IN  
HERAT. AT DOI THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BROKERED CEASE FIRE IS  
HOLDING ALTHOUGH BOTH PRINCIPAL COMBATANTS GOVERNOR  
((ISMAEL)) KHAN AND INDEPENDENT MILITIA LEADER ((AMANULLAH))  
KHAN CONTINUE TO POSTURE AND CLAIM VIOLATIONS OF THE  
AGREEMENT.

2. (U) OVERVIEW - SHINDAND COMMANDER AMANULLAH KHAN BROKE  
THROUGH FRONT LINES AND CAME WITHIN 20 KILOMETERS OF HERAT'S  
AIRPORT ON AUGUST 17, BUT WAS PUSHED BACK BY THREATS OF ANA

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AND U.S. INTERVENTION. THAT SAME DAY WITNESSED MANEUVERS AND CLASHES ALONG FRONTS IN BADGHIS, ALONG THE GHOR-HERAT BORDER, AND IN WESTERN HERAT PROVINCE. MANY SPECULATE THE ATTACKS WERE COORDINATED AND MAY HAVE HAD TACIT BLESSING OF SOME IN KARZAI'S CABINET. WHILE A CEASE-FIRE BROKERED BY KABUL AND U.S. OFFICIALS TOOK EFFECT LATE ON THE 17TH AND HAS GENERALLY HELD, HERAT'S GOVERNOR ISMAEL KHAN CONTINUES TO CALL FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO FORCE AMANULLAH TO RELINQUISH ALL TERRITORY HE HAS SEIZED SINCE TAKING SHINDAND AIRBASE ON 14 AUGUST. ON 20 AUGUST KABUL DISPATCHED A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE FIGHTING AND RECOMMEND NEXT STEPS. HERAT'S GOVERNOR IS ALSO CALLING ON THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO CLARIFY AMANULLAH'S TIES TO THE TALIBAN, HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES HAVE MADE SPECIFIC CLAIMS OF TALIBAN FIGURES JOINING THE FIGHT FROM HELMAND, KANDAHAR, AND URUZGAN. WHILE MOST CLAIMS ARE DIFFICULT TO SUBSTANTIATE, THE PRT HAS SEEN EVIDENCE OF TORTURE BY TROOPS LOYAL TO AMANULLAH. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE FOLLOW-ON ATTACKS, TENSION IN THE CITY REMAINS HIGH, AND THERE ARE STRONG POPULAR DEMANDS FOR MORE DECISIVE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS.

3. (U) AMANULLAH KHAN DRIVE ON HERAT - AFTER TAKING SHINDAND AIRBASE IN A SURPRISE ATTACK AUGUST 14, AND ENGAGING HERAT GOVERNOR'S FORCES IN TWO DAYS OF SKIRMISHES, ON AUGUST 17 AMANULLAH KHAN BROKE THROUGH THE FRONT LINES NORTH OF THAT CITY. APPROXIMATELY 20 KILOMETERS FROM HERAT'S AIRPORT AMANULLAH WAS STOPPED BY THE THREAT OF ANA/U.S. INTERVENTION CONVEYED BY SENIOR AFGHAN AND INTERNATIONAL OFFICIALS IN KABUL. U.S. WARPLANES WERE CALLED IN TO DEMONSTRATE THE

/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 2 \*\*\*\*\*/

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SERIOUSNESS OF KABUL'S INTENT. AS AMANULLAH WITHDREW HIS TROOPS INITIALLY TO ADRASKAN ON THE 17TH, AN AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY (ANA) FORCE WAS INSERTED BETWEEN THE TWO WARRING FACTIONS AND A CEASE-FIRE WAS CALLED.

4. (U) HERAT PROVINCIAL MFA REPORTED THAT BY THE 18TH, 23 BODIES FROM ISMAEL KHAN'S SIDE HAD BEEN RETURNED TO HERAT, 7 HAD BEEN BURIED IN SHINDAND. 43 BODIES HAD BEEN RECOVERED, 21 WERE INJURED, AND OVER 100 MISSING. REPORTEDLY BOTH THE AIRBASE COMMANDER HABIBULLAH ((AZIMI)) AND THE COMMANDER OF THE SHINDAND BORDER BRIGADE ABDUL ((KARIM)) HAD BEEN KILLED. THE MFA CLAIMED THAT THESE TWO MEN AND ONE OTHER SENIOR LEADER HAD BEEN BEHEADED. HERAT MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION

(AND CLOSE ISMAEL KHAN CONFIDANTE) REPORTED ON AUGUST 21 THAT AMANULLAH'S MEN HAD ENGAGED IN KIDNAPPINGS, TORTURE, AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS. OTHER CONTACTS HAVE CLAIMED THAT AMANULLAH HAD BURIED SOME OF HIS VICTIMS IN A MASS GRAVE. PRT HAS NOT SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF BEHEADINGS OR MASS GRAVES, BUT ONE TEAM FROM THE PRT WHO TRAVELED TO SCENE OF THE FIGHTING AUGUST 21 (WITH U.S. FORCES FROM SHINDAND) DID DISCOVER BODY PARTS, A SCALP, AND EVIDENCE OF TORTURE (APPARENT PARTIAL SKINNING OF VICTIMS). THEIR EVIDENCE WILL BE TURNED OVER TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DELEGATION IN HERAT. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTING ON CASUALTIES ON AMANULLAH KHAN'S SIDE.

5. (U) FORCES WITHDRAW BUT NOT STATUS QUO ANTE - BY AUGUST 20 AMANULLAH HAD FULLY WITHDRAWN FROM ADRASKAN, BUT AS OF AUGUST 21 STILL OCCUPIED POSITIONS HE HAD TAKEN BY FORCE, INCLUDING THE ENTIRE CITY OF SHINDAND WHERE UP TO 500 ARMED MEN WERE PATROLLING. NEITHER THE ANA, AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP) (WHICH DEPLOYED WITH 70 MEN INTO THE TOWN ON AUGUST 20), NOR U.S. TEAMS HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO DISARM OR TO MOVE HIS MEN BY FORCE. ANA FORCES WERE PLANNING TO DISMANTLE AMANULLAH'S THREE CHECKPOINTS NORTH OF THE AIRPORT ON AUGUST 22. ISMAIL KHAN STILL HAS APPROXIMATELY 50 MEN AND SOME HEAVY WEAPONS APPROXIMATELY 30 KILOMETERS NORTH OF ADRASKAN (2 MLRS, 2 BMP'S, 1 ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN), AND HAS INDICATED THEY WILL STAY UNTIL HE HAS RECOVERED THE BODIES OF HIS MEN.

6. (U) U.S. FORCES REPORTED THAT SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL, BOTH AMANULLAH AND ISMAEL KHAN HAD COMPLIED WITH INSTRUCTIONS FROM U.S. AND ANA TEAMS, ALTHOUGH HERAT'S GOVERNOR HAD DONE SO RELUCTANTLY. ISMAEL KHAN HAD ALSO CONTINUED FIRING ON AMANULLAH, AND U.S. FORCES WHO WERE WITH HIM, AFTER NEGOTIATIONS HAD COMMENCED ON THE 17TH, BUT CEASED FIRE AFTER REPEATED REQUESTS BY THE PRT AND OTHERS. WHILE AMANULLAH APPARENTLY TOLD THE U.S. COMMANDER AT SHINDAND HE WOULD TURN OVER ALL HIS TERRITORY TO THE ANA, HE HAS YET TO MAKE MOVES IN THAT DIRECTION AND IS LIKELY AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS FROM KABUL. AMANULLAH HAS ALSO HAMPERED SOMEWHAT EFFORTS BY ISMAEL KHAN TO RETRIEVE BODIES; HERAT'S GOVERNOR TOLD US AUGUST 22 THIS WAS A VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT HE REACHED WITH PARTIES IN KABUL. U.S. MILITARY INDICATED THAT AMANULLAH HAD TAKEN 21 TANKS AND AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF MLRS FROM THE AMF 21ST DIVISION DURING THE FIGHTING, REPORTEDLY ONLY 5 OF THE TANKS HAD BEEN OPERATIONAL. ISMAEL KHAN TOLD

PRT AUGUST 22 THAT AMANULLAH HAD CAPTURED ONLY 13 TANKS, AND HE STILL HAD THEM.

7. (U) OTHER FRONTS HEATED - SHINDAND WAS NOT THE ONLY FRONT TO RE-IGNITE ON THE 17TH. ON THE 17TH AND 18TH, HERAT'S GOVERNOR ALSO SENT TROOPS TO HEAD OFF ATTACKS FROM THE EAST BY FORCES LOYAL TO GHOR GOVERNOR IBRAHIM ((MALEKZADE)), FROM THE WEST BY FORCES LOYAL TO AMANULLAH KHAN, AND FROM THE NORTH BY FORCES LOYAL TO 17TH AMF DIVISION COMMANDER ZAHER /\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 3 \*\*\*\*\*/

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((NAEBZADEH)) AND FORMER HERAT CITY POLICE CHIEF ((KHOJA ISA)). THESE FRONTS HAD ALREADY HEATED UP PRIOR TO OR COINCIDENT WITH THE FIRST MOVE BY AMANULLAH.

8. (U) TENSIONS ON THE 17TH WERE PARTICULARLY HIGH IN QALA-I-NOW, WITH MULTIPLE SOURCES (INCLUDING ANA TEAMS IN BADGHIS) REPORTING THAT A NUMBER OF COMMANDERS SQUARED OFF ON BOTH SIDES; NAEBZADEH TOLD POLOFF HE AND HIS BROTHER (PROVINCIAL POLICE CHIEF) HAD CALLED IN POLICE FROM ALL OVER THE PROVINCE TO DEFEND THE CITY. HE SAID HE WAS NOT BEING PERMITTED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO USE THE AMF FORCES LOYAL TO HIM (REMNANTS OF 17TH DIVISION), AND AT ONE POINT APPEARED TO BE HOPING HE COULD CALL ON THE ANA TO HELP DEFEND THE CITY. OFFICERS FROM THE ANA AND LOCAL ELDERS HELPED TO MEDIATE THAT DISPUTE. UNAMA AND MOST NGO'S EVACUATED THEIR STAFF FROM THE PROVINCE ON AUGUST 18.

9. (U) ALTHOUGH NEVER CONFIRMED, UNAMA AND TRIBAL CONTACTS REPORTED FIGHTING BETWEEN KHAN'S SURROGATES AND LOCAL COMMANDERS IN GHOR OVER A KEY CHECKPOINT AT DAYR-I-TAKHT, ON THE BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO PROVINCES. ON AUGUST 22, THERE WERE FURTHER REPORTS THAT AMANULLAH WAS SENDING TROOPS TO ATTACK FARSI DISTRICT, ON THE BORDER OF GHOR. PRT WAS UNABLE TO CONFIRM THE REPORTS, TO DATE NONE OF THEM HAS RESULTED IN WIDESPREAD CONFLICT.

10. (U) WHAT WAS THE PLAN? - CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUT THESE SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS (OR THREATS) ABOUND. AT LEAST TWO CREDIBLE SOURCES REPORTED POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR A COORDINATED ATTACK ON THE CITY. JUST PRIOR TO THE 17TH, ONE RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTED THAT NAEBZADEH WAS PLANNING TO LAUNCH A CONCERTED ATTACK FROM THE NORTH, AND THAT HE AND AMANULLAH WOULD STOP SHORT OF THE CITY TO AWAIT A POPULAR UPRISING THAT WOULD INCLUDE ARMED MEMBERS OF HERAT'S SHIA POPULATION. THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER, PERSISTENT, BUT

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF ATTEMPTS TO MOUNT AN ATTACK THAT WOULD REMOVE HERAT'S GOVERNOR FROM POWER, BOTH IN CONCERT WITH AND INDEPENDENTLY OF AMANULLAH AND NAEBZADEH, THESE REPORTS HAVE PERSISTED EVEN SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE BROKERED ON AUGUST.

ISMAEL KHAN STATED ON AUGUST 21 THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THE ATTACKS WERE COORDINATED AND SANCTIONED BY "SOMEONE" IN KABUL (BUT NOT KARZAI), WHILE U.S. FORCES IN SHINDAND SAY AMANULLAH IMPLIES HE ACTED WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. KHAN PREVIOUSLY HAD TOLD POLOFF THAT AMANULLAH HAS RECEIVED FINANCIAL BACKING FROM FORMER KANDAHAR GOVERNOR ((SHIRZAI)), NOW IN KABUL SERVING AS MINISTER OF URBAN PLANNING. KHAN TOLD PRT ON AUGUST 22 THAT AMANULLAH AND NAEBZADEH WERE COORDINATING, BUT NAEBZADEH WAS NOT A REAL THREAT BECAUSE HE LACKED POPULAR SUPPORT IN BADGHIS. AMANULLAH ON THE OTHER HAND WAS ONLY A SERIOUS THREAT BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT HE RECEIVED OUTSIDE HERAT.

11. (U) ON AUGUST 18, THERE WERE SOME REPORTS OF ANTI-COALITION SENTIMENT AMONG JIHADIS DEMONSTRATING AS BODIES ARRIVED BACK IN HERAT FOR BURIAL. ONE CONTACT WORKING FOR A U.S. CONTRACTOR REPORTED THAT THE VIEW ON THE STREET IS THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OR THE U.S. SANCTIONED THE JOINT ATTACK. HERAT'S GOVERNOR MAY HAVE HELPED TO DISPEL THIS SENTIMENT IN PUBLIC COMMENTS MARCH 20, HIGHLIGHTING THAT THE ATTACK HAD NOT BEEN ORDERED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT NOR THE U.S., STATING INSTEAD IT WAS THE WORK OF THE TALIBAN.

12. (U) ISMAEL KHAN HAS INCREASED HIS RHETORIC, CONDEMNING AMANULLAH, WHIPPING UP THE PUBLIC TO HELP DEFEND THE CITY, AND OPENLY BLAMING HERAT CHIEF JUSTICE MULLAH ((KHODODAD)) FOR INSTIGATING THE FIGHTING FROM KABUL. FORMER EDUCATION  
/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 4 \*\*\*\*\*/

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MINISTER MOHAMMAD YUNUS ((QANUNI)), WHO IS A PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER AND CLOSE TO KHAN SUGGESTED ON AUGUST 16 THAT GOVERNMENT FIGURES ARE BEHIND THE FIGHTING. "THE SITUATION IN HERAT SHOWS AT LEAST TWO FACTS," HE SAID, "A NUMBER OF HIGH-RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE BEHIND THE SCENES; IT ALSO DEMONSTRATES THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL THE SITUATION."

13. (U) TALIBAN ROLE? - SHINDAND CHIEF OF POLICE, LATE ON THE 17TH, REPORTED THAT AMANULLAH HAD BEEN PLANNING THIS ATTACK FOR ABOUT A WEEK, OR MORE ACCURATELY WAS USED AS A FOIL FOR THE ATTACK BY TALIBS INCLUDING MULLAH ((BARADAR))

(FORMER WESTERN REGION LEADER DURING TALIBAN REGIME) AND MULLAH ((SAMAR)) (FORMER HERAT POLICE CHIEF UNDER THE TALIBAN). HERAT MFA ALSO REPORTED THAT MULLAH ((DAADULLAH)), A VERY PROMINENT PROTEGE OF MULLAH OMAR, HAD TAKEN PART IN THE CONFLICT. AMANULLAH DENIED THIS CLAIM DURING THE FIGHTING ON THE 17TH. MFA REPS FURTHER REPORTED THAT THEY HAD INFORMATION INDICATING THAT TALIBAN MEMBERS FROM MUSA ABAD (WEST OF HERAT TOWARDS IRANIAN BORDER) HAD ALSO JOINED THE ATTACK: AZIZ ((ACHEKZAI)) (FROM ISLAM QALA), GUL ((AHMAD)) (OF CHA-GAZ IN GHORYAN), MOHAMMED ((MAHDIZAI)), AND MAMAN ((NIAZI)) (GULRAN DISTRICT). THE LAST TWO HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY BRUTAL DURING TALIBAN RULE, THEY ALL HAILED FROM HERAT PROVINCE'S MAJORITY PASHTUN DISTRICTS AND HAD ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE TALIBAN EFFORTS TO TERRORIZE THE TAJIK POPULATION.

14. (U) PRT HAS ALSO RECEIVED REPORTS FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES AND INDEPENDENTLY WITNESSED HERAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HANDING OUT WEAPONS TO CITIZENS TO HELP DEFEND THE CITY. SOME OF THESE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN CENTERED AT THE HERAT DIRECTORATE OF TRANSPORTATION, OTHERS HAVE OCCURRED AT THE NDS OFFICE IN THE CITY. HERAT'S GOVERNOR DENIED HE HAD HANDED OUT WEAPONS, HE SAID ONLY THAT CITIZENS CAME IN TO REGISTER THEIR GUNS AND VOLUNTEER THEM IN DEFENSE OF THE CITY.

15. (U) AMANULLAH VICTORIOUS? - HERAT MFA CONTACTS AND GOVERNOR KHAN HIMSELF REPORT THAT AMANULLAH WAS ABLE TO BREACH THE FRONT LINES BECAUSE HE HAD CO-OPTED THE DEPUTY COMMANDER OF 17TH DIVISION SAYAD FAZL ((AHMAD)), WHO PRIOR TO THE ATTACK HAD COLLECTED ARMS FOR "INSPECTION" FROM 21ST AMF DIVISION SOLDIERS. MFA SAID AHMAD ALSO PASSED ON PASSWORDS FROM ISMAIL KHAN'S SIDE TO FACILITATE THE THRUST. U.S. FORCES WATCHING THE PITCHED TANK BATTLE FROM SHINDAND AIRBASE REPORTED THAT AMANULLAH'S MEN WERE MORE ACCURATE IN THEIR FIRE THAN THEIR OPPONENTS; THIS TOO COULD HAVE AIDED THEIR SUCCESS. HERAT'S GOVERNOR SAID THAT AMANULLAH HAD ALSO GOTTEN TALIBAN HELP FROM URUZGAN, HELMAND, AND KANDAHAR PROVINCES. WHEN QUERIED, ONE VEHICLE OF MUJAHIDIN CONDUCTING A BODY RECOVERY MISSION AT THE AIRBASE STATED THAT THEY WERE PART OF SHIRZAI'S MILITIA FROM KANDAHAR. US FORCES REPORTED THAT WHEN THEY FIRST ENCOUNTERED AMANULLAH'S FIGHTERS ON AUGUST 17 ON THE FRONT-LINE, IT APPEARED THEY NUMBERED FROM 3000-5000. PREVIOUSLY, PRT ESTIMATED AMANULLAH COULD ONLY RALLY 1500 MEN.

16. (U) NEXT STEPS AND DEFLECTING PRESSURE ON U.S. IN THE WEST - ON AUGUST 20, A 17-MAN DELEGATION LED BY FORMER MINISTER MOHAMMED ALAM ((RASICH)) ARRIVED IN SHINDAND TO INVESTIGATE. RASICH SAID HE WOULD INVESTIGATE THE FIGHTING AND RECOMMEND NEXT STEPS. AFGHAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR ((JALALI)) SAID ON AUGUST 21 THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS "DETERMINED TO DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO PREVENT ACTIVITIES OF MILITIA WHO WANT TO BRING THE LAW UNDER THEIR CONTROL. THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW MILITIAS TO . . . ATTACK GOVERNMENT /\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 5 \*\*\*\*\*/

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SOVEREIGNTY AND FOUNDATIONS." HE SAID THE INCIDENTS HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR DISARMAMENT, AND CONFIRMED THAT THE DELEGATION WOULD BE TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT THE SITUATION IN THE WEST (TO INCLUDE THE PROVINCES OF GHOR AND BADGHIS).

17. (U) DELEGATION MEMBERS STATED ON AUGUST 22 THEY WOULD LEAVE HERAT AUGUST 24, THEY DO NOT PLAN TO TRAVEL TO EITHER BADGHIS OR GHOR. ISMAEL KHAN TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 22 THAT THE DELEGATION WAS NOT ABLE TO EFFECT PRACTICAL STEPS. HE REMINDED PRT OF STATEMENTS BY KARZAI AND AMBASSADOR THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WOULD DISARM AMANULLAH. "THE LONGER IT TAKES, HE SAID, THE MORE IT WILL AFFECT THE CREDIBILITY OF COALITION FORCES."

18. (U) ULTIMATELY NEITHER THE ANA NOR U.S. EMBEDDED ENGAGED DIRECTLY IN FIGHTING, BUT THEY DID INTERVENE TO ESTABLISH A BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN THE COMBATANTS, PROVIDE A SHOW OF FORCE WITH COALITION AIRPOWER, AND TO FACILITATE NEGOTIATIONS AND CEASE-FIRE. ISMAEL KHAN STATED ON AUGUST 22 THAT THE ANA "DOES NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE" IN THE FIGHT. KHAN WAS NOT PLEASED HOWEVER THAT THE ANA HAD NOT FORCED AMANULLAH'S TROOPS TO LEAVE SHINDAND. HE PRESSED THE PRT TO GET THE COALITION AND ANA TO HELP PUSH AMANULLAH BACK TO HIS HOME BASE OF ZIR-E KOH, WITHDRAWING FROM THE AIRFIELD, 21ST DIVISION, AND SHINDAND CITY.

(b)(1), 1.4 (c)

