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**CDS**

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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**HEADER**

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(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

TO RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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**CONTROLS** (b)(3):10 USC 424

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SECTION 1 OF 2

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

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

**BODY**

COUNTRY: (U) AFGHANISTAN (AFG); PAKISTAN (PAK).

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

DOI: (U) 20110524.

(b)(3):10 USC 424

SOURCE:

SOURCE A.

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

(b)(1),1.4 (b),1.4 (c),1.4 (d)

(b)(1),(b)(3):10 USC 424,1.4 (b),1.4 (c),1.4 (d)

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(b)(1), 1.4 (b), 1.4 (c), 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY: (U) SEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, TEXT PARAGRAPH 1, BELOW.

ENCLOSURES

(b)(1), 1.4 (b), 1.4 (c), 1.4 (d)

(b)(3):10  
USC 424 2. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: MULLAH ((OMAR)) HAS BEEN THE LEADER OF THE AFGHAN TALIBAN SINCE THE MOVEMENT WAS FOUNDED (1994). IN 1996, IN KANDAHAR, HE WAS PROCLAIMED THE FAITHFUL COMMANDER (AMIR UL MOMENIN) BY AN ASSEMBLY OF ULEMAS, THUS ESTABLISHING HIS STATUS OF SPIRITUAL WORLDLY LEADER. HE HAS BEEN FORCED TO TAKE FLIGHT AND LIVE UNDERGROUND SINCE THE WESTERN INTERVENTION, AND THE FALL OF HIS REGIME (OCTOBER 2001). MULLAH OMAR'S SELF-EFFACEMENT IN THE MEDIA, A LINE HE ALSO FORCED OTHER TALIBAN LEADERS TO FOLLOW, IS CONTRASTING WITH THE MEDIA EXPOSURE OF OTHER FIGURES OF THE ISLAMIST NETWORK (OSAMA ((BIN LADEN)) FOR INSTANCE). BACK WHEN HE WAS RULING AFGHANISTAN, HE USED TO LEAD A CLOISTERED LIFE IN KANDAHAR, AND TO HEAD TO KABUL ONLY ON VERY FEW OCCASIONS. TODAY, THE TALIBAN OFFICIALS REGULARLY REFER TO MULLAH OMAR IN THEIR STATEMENTS, REMINDING THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO AMIR ((UL MOMENIN)), WHEREAS HE HIMSELF SELDOM COMMUNICATES AND NO VIDEO PICTURING HIM HAS EVER BEEN DISPLAYED. THOUGH HIS EXACT ROLE IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS, MULLAH OMAR IS A CENTRAL FIGURE ON THE AFGHAN INSURGENT SCENE, ESPECIALLY AS THE TUTELARY FIGURE HEAD. THE TALIBAN MOVEMENT ACTUALLY REORGANIZED AROUND HIM IN 2003, AND TOOK A NATIONALIST SCOPE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY LOTFOLLAH ((MASHAL)) (THE SPOKESMAN OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY, NDS) ON MAY 23 THAT MULLAH OMAR HAD DISAPPEARED FOR SEVERAL DAYS WAS IMMEDIATELY DENIED BY THE AFGHAN TALIBAN. ON MAY 23, 2011, MANY AFGHAN AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REPORTED THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY AFGHAN OFFICIALS ABOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE, EVEN DEMISE, OF MULLAH OMAR, THE AFGHAN TALIBAN'S LEADER.

(b)(3):10  
USC 424 3. [REDACTED] 1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF MULLAH OMAR'S DISAPPEARANCE AND THE VARIOUS REACTIONS.  
ON MAY 23, 2011, IN KABUL, LOTFOLLAH MASHAL, THE NDS'S SPOKESMAN BELONGING TO PRESIDENT HAMID ((KARZAI))'S INNER CIRCLE, ANNOUNCED TO THE AFGHAN PRESS THAT MULLAH OMAR HAD DISAPPEARED FOR FOUR DAYS, WHILE MOVING BETWEEN QUETTA (HIS ALLEGED HIDEOUT IN BALOCHISTAN

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PROVINCE) AND NORTH WAZIRISTAN (HAQQANI NETWORK'S SANCTUARY). MULLAH OMAR'S DISAPPEARANCE IS SAID TO HAVE STIRRED PANIC AMONG TALIBAN OFFICIALS. THOUGH HE CLAIMED HE WAS UNABLE TO SAY WHETHER THE TALIBAN'S LEADER HAD ACTUALLY DIED, MR. MASHAL DID NOT RULE HIS DEATH OUT, TALKING ABOUT A POSSIBLE BRAWL BETWEEN INSURGENT GROUPS, AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF SOME FORMER MEMBERS OF THE PAKISTANI INTER SERVICES INTELLIGENCE (ISI) WHO REPORTEDLY ORGANIZED MULLAH OMAR'S TRIP. HAMID ((GUL)), A FORMER ISI DIRECTOR, REJECTED THESE ALLEGATIONS. THE AFGHAN MEDIA VERY RAPIDLY REACTED, AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH WHAT THEY USUALLY DO, CHALLENGED DIRECTLY PAKISTAN AND ISI IN PARTICULAR. ZABIOLLAH ((MODJAHED)), PURPORTED TO BE THE TALIBAN'S SPOKESMAN, DENIED IMMEDIATELY MULLAH OMAR'S DISAPPEARANCE. A COMMUNIQUE WAS POSTED ON THE SAME DAY ON THE INTERNET WEB SITE OF THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF AFGHANISTAN, DEEMED THE NEWS A "VAIN PROPAGANDA ORGANIZED BY THE PUPPET GOVERNMENT AND THE INVADERS". THE PAKISTANI TALIBAN, THROUGH THEIR SPOKESMAN, EHSANULLAH ((EHSAN)), ALSO DENIED THE RUMORS. ISAF CLAIMED IT COULD NOT CONFIRM OR DENY THE NEWS OF MULLAH OMAR'S DISAPPEARANCE. THE PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES CLAIMED THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO CONFIRM THE INFORMATION (DECLARATION BY SALMAN ((BASHIR)), FOREIGN SECRETARY AND REHMAN ((MALIK)), INTERIOR MINISTER).

(b)(1),(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i),1.4 (b),1.4 (c),1.4 (d)

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