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FROM

(b)(2),(b)(3):10 USC 424

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SECTION 1 OF 2

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

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SUBJ:

SUBJECT

DIA COMMONWEALTH INTSUM 534-94/7 DEC 94

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{U} THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY

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AFGHANISTAN: SITUATION UPDATE {U}

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AFGHANISTAN: SITUATION UPDATE {U}
AS OF 2200Z 7 DEC 94

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/

1. ~~(S)~~ AN EMERGING POLITICAL-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT, THE "**TALIBAN**," HAS TAKEN OVER MUCH OF SOUTHEASTERN AFGHANISTAN AND HAS INJECTED A NEW ELEMENT INTO THE DEADLOCKED CIVIL WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

2. ~~(S)~~ THE **TALIBAN** {RELIGIOUS STUDENTS} BEGAN IN KANDAHAR PROVINCE LAST SPRING. THE MOVEMENT NOW CONTROLS MOST OF KANDAHAR AND IS REPORTED TO HAVE MOVED INTO ZABUL, GHAZNI, **HELMAND**, AND ORUZGAN

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PROVINCES. IT APPEARS TO ENJOY THE ADMIRATION OF MANY AFGHANS FOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST BANDITS AND FACTIONAL LEADERS, WHO ARE SEEN AS EXTORTIONIST AND UNRESPONSIVE. THE MULLAH-LED GROUP'S STATED GOALS ARE FREEING THE ROADS FROM BANDITS, RESTORING LAW AND ORDER, AND SHOWING RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS NORMS. THE **TALIBAN** MOVEMENT REPORTEDLY IS RECEIVING SOME LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM PAKISTAN, ALTHOUGH IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS SUPPORT IS SANCTIONED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OR IS AN INDEPENDENT EFFORT OF THE INTER- SERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE (ISID).

3. ~~(C)~~ THE **TALIBAN**'S RAPID RISE TO PROMINENCE IS A SIGN OF POPULAR FRUSTRATION IN AFGHANISTAN WITH THE CONTINUED FIGHTING AND BANDITRY. THE MOVEMENT PRESENTS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE FACTIONAL LEADERS AND RESPONDS TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE'S DESIRE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY. ALTHOUGH THE **TALIBAN**'S ULTIMATE GOALS ARE UNKNOWN, THE GROUP'S LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND FINANCIAL BACKING LIKELY WILL LEAVE IT UNABLE TO EXPAND ITS CONTROL MUCH FARTHER IN THE NEAR TERM. FOR NOW, THE **TALIBAN** WILL BE ABLE AT LEAST TO CREATE A POCKET OF RELATIVE STABILITY IN ITS AREA OF CONTROL IN SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN, SIMILAR TO WHAT NOW EXISTS IN NANGARHAR AND HERAT PROVINCES. ~~(DECL OADR)~~

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