

MEMORANDUM

Confidential Draft for
Discussion Purposes

To: Mr. Hamed R. Wardak
From: Nicholas W. Allard
Cc: Jennifer S. Zucker
David M. Tafuri
Robert S. Kapla
Date: January 30, 2009
Subject: Proposed Strategy for Promoting Afghanistan's Interests with the United States

The following is a comprehensive plan for Patton Boggs LLP ("Patton Boggs") to assist you in achieving your objective for Afghanistan. In brief, we propose a three-stage effort. Patton Boggs will: (1) collect information about the new Administration's emerging policy and communicate that information to you; (2) advocate a meaningful, long-term U.S. strategy in Afghanistan that goes beyond military involvement; and (3) if appropriate, launch a discreet campaign to find an alternative candidate to lead Afghanistan. In conducting our work, we will scrupulously ensure that our efforts are consistent with all relevant U.S. ethics, disclosure, and reporting laws and regulations.

OBJECTIVE

As we understand it, your key objective is to re-frame the debate concerning the U.S. role in Afghanistan and the bilateral relationship between the two countries. In short, the "end game" should involve more than simply finding Osama Bin Laden and disengaging the U.S. military presence, but instead re-empowering Afghanistan and its government to put the country on a path toward sustainable security, transparency and economic prosperity.

THE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

The U.S. foreign policy environment is tremendously complex and can be likened to a multi-dimensional chess game of competing interests and policies. Each level has internal divisions and influences the decisions of the other levels. For instance, in the Executive Branch, foreign policy is the domain of the White House (including the Office of the Vice President) and the National Security Council, which resolves the differences between the Departments of State and Defense with the advice of the Intelligence agencies.

In the second level – the Legislative Branch – Democratic and Republican Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate compete with each other both individually and via their respective Leaderships. Both of these political parties have decidedly different foreign policy agendas, particularly as the Republicans are now forced to differentiate themselves from a Democratically controlled Congress and a centrist Democratic President.

In turn, both the Executive and Legislative Branches interact with the media and a number of non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”), each of which impact foreign policy from outside the Government. To successfully effectuate a foreign policy change, therefore, requires calculated contacts at each of these levels.

STRATEGY

Stage one for our effort will be to determine Washington’s view of Afghanistan. That view is currently in flux as the new Administration (and Congress) is reviewing the U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Patton Boggs will conduct “soft soundings” across a range of Executive and Legislative Branch contacts to collect information on the current thinking toward Afghanistan. This information will help us formulate our message and strategy.

Based on the information collected in Stage one, Stage two will involve the creation of a “white paper” that will advocate for greater focus on Afghanistan, summarize the challenges Afghanistan faces in stabilizing the country, and define a list of variables necessary to address those challenges. This paper will set forth the main facts and principles underpinning the objectives of our overall effort. It will also discuss the failure of the central government – and its leader – to protect and provide for its citizens.

Naturally, the discussion will evolve into a debate about Afghanistan’s current leader and who should lead in the future, particularly in light of the presidential election later this year. Once this transition occurs, Patton Boggs will promote Stage three of our advocacy which will entail a discreet discussion of the characteristics Afghanistan’s leader must possess to achieve success. At the appropriate time, based on our assessment of the Obama Administration’s receptiveness to supporting someone other than Afghanistan’s current leader, we will wage a discreet campaign at the highest levels of the Administration and the U.S. Congress, the foundation of which will be to promote the best alternative candidate based on a list of defined characteristics.

There are two key dynamics on which the effort will build. First, the Obama Administration is in the midst of a shift in U.S. foreign policy that will impact the mission in Afghanistan, militarily and otherwise. Now is the time to insert ourselves into that debate. Second, it is already widely reported that the U.S. is losing patience with Afghanistan’s leader. Some in the U.S. Government have intimated that a more effective candidate could be found in the Afghan military establishment, which has emerged as the most respected institution in Afghanistan.

While our strategy will take advantage of these and other opportunities, it is designed to be flexible. We expect it will take significant time and effort to build support for our campaign and there will be victories and setbacks along the way. Certainly, as we talk with U.S. policymakers, we will learn of developments that will require us to modify our approach. Thus, our strategy must and will evolve with regional developments and shifts in U.S. policy. Within the three stages of our strategy, we recommend the following steps.

1. Establish an Advocacy Organization

The first step is to establish an entity that will act as the “face” of our campaign. This organization will be Patton Boggs’s client.

We suggest creating an organization such as the “Campaign for a United Afghanistan” or the “U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership”. The organization’s title is not as important as its mission, which will be carefully crafted to amplify our objective stated above. While we suggest the organization be discreet, we recommend it at least have a website with ample background so that those we meet with will have a credible point of contact and a resource to conduct due diligence on our effort.

The organization will need to be registered and we recommend doing so in the District of Columbia. You will need to decide what type of organization you want to set up. We will advise you on this matter and handle the registration process.

2. Develop a Compelling Message

We will help you develop message points that are consistent with the objectives listed above and will resonate with U.S. policymakers. These will form our talking points as we speak with officials, and ultimately, they will help drive the debate in Washington. The message points will be consistent with the following broad themes:

How to Stabilize Afghanistan

- ✓ **Build Sustainable Security.** Security is the number one priority of the Afghan people. The Taliban came to power on the premise that they could bring security to Afghanistan. Simply put, the Afghan Government must demonstrate it can do a better than the Taliban at providing security.
- ✓ **Foster Good Governance.** The Afghan Government is crippled due to the predatory and corrupt nature of many of its officials. Good governance will legitimize the Government and help it wage an effective counter-insurgency.

- ✓ **Battle Corruption.** Corruption pervades the Afghan Government to the highest levels and has eroded public confidence. The Government must aggressively root out corruption if it is to regain legitimacy and effectiveness.
- ✓ **Improve Relations with Pakistan.** Improving the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship lies at the heart of stabilizing the country. The current leader of Afghanistan is antagonistic toward Pakistan which has perpetuated the Taliban's ability to destabilize the country. By contrast an Afghan Government that is willing and able to work with Pakistan and the U.S. will help advance regional stability.
- ✓ **Fighting the Drug Trade.** The drug trade is a prominent source of financing for radical Islam and terrorism, and is a long-term significant obstacle to a stable Afghanistan. The Afghan Government has been increasingly co-opted by the drug trade which has led to a deterioration of government institutions. The Government, in partnership with the international community, must engage in an aggressive, sustained interdiction against narcotics suppliers and traffickers. This must include a program to generate viable alternative sources of income for farmers to sustain their families.
- ✓ **Generating Local Support.** Defeating the Taliban and Al Qaeda requires activating local networks such as the tribes, urban intelligentsia, and nationally oriented former Mujahedeen. The U.S. must support an Afghan Government which can localize the conflict, mobilize the population, and marshal local support.
- ✓ **Promote an Anti-Radical Ideology.** The Afghan Government must project a coherent and locally acceptable anti-radical ideology. This ideology must incorporate nationalist and traditionalist Islamic values.

As our campaign develops, the discussion inevitably will turn to the upcoming presidential election and the ability of each candidate – including the incumbent – to generate positive change on the ground. This stage of our advocacy will be guided by the following points:

Characteristics of an Effective Leader for Afghanistan

- ✓ **Ability to Provide Security.** A successful presidential candidate must be able to deliver security – the number one priority of the Afghan people.
- ✓ **Corruption Free.** The candidate must be free of corruption and demonstrate a history of, and strong commitment to, battling corruption.
- ✓ **Effective Manager.** The candidate must have a demonstrated ability to manage effectively.

- ✓ **Resistance Against the Soviets.** Because a majority of the Afghan public was engaged in the struggle against the Soviets as members of the U.S.-supported Mujahedeen, a successful candidate must have verifiable credentials supporting the same. This provides Islamic credibility, an important requirement by voters.
- ✓ **Strong Relationships with the Tribes.** The tribal system is paramount to securing the peace. The candidate must have a good understanding of and strong relationships with the tribal structure.
- ✓ **Negotiating Ability with Pakistan.** Stability requires the candidate to be able to negotiate a deal with Pakistan and the U.S. which ends Pakistan's support for the Taliban.
- ✓ **Counter Narcotics.** The tremendous influence that the narcotics trade has on perpetuating radical Islam and terrorism in Afghanistan requires that the candidate have the commitment and demonstrated ability to aggressively tackle the narcotics trade from the ground up.
- ✓ **Non-U.S. Citizen.** Afghans demand a non-U.S. citizen as their next leader. Candidates that are U.S. citizens lack legitimacy and will harm U.S. credibility.
- ✓ **National-Oriented.** The candidate must be national-oriented, as opposed to tribal-oriented, in order to continue an effective, sectarian reconciliation process.
- ✓ **Team Player.** The candidate must be a team builder and inspire working relationships across the factional and ethnic divides.

3. Advocate within the Executive Branch

The Executive Branch is currently reviewing U.S. policy toward Afghanistan. U.S. Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrook, will soon head to the region on a fact-finding mission. The U.S. Central Command ("CENTCOM") will soon release its review of policy and concept of operations going forward for the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, with a particular focus on Afghanistan. These and other events will have policy implications for Afghanistan. It therefore will be important to build strong lines of communication with various offices in the Executive Branch including:

- **The White House:** Including the Office of the Vice President and the National Security Council.

- **The Department of State:** Including the Offices of the Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, Undersecretary for Policy; and the Bureaus for South and Central Asian Affairs, Political-Military Affairs, and Intelligence and Research.
- **The Department of Defense:** Including the Offices of the Secretary, the Undersecretary of International Security Affairs, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.
- **The Joint Chiefs of Staff:** Including the unified commands and CENTCOM in particular.
- **The Directorate of National Intelligence:** Coordinating intelligence planning and analysis from each of the intelligence agencies of the U.S. Government.

The Obama Administration is setting a new course toward a more traditional, diplomacy-driven, multi-lateral U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, it is demonstrating a recommitted allegiance to multilateral institutions for managing global disputes which threaten U.S. interests. As such, we also propose communicating regularly with the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (“NATO”) both of whom are heavily involved in Afghanistan and will be influential in charting the country’s future.

4. Advocate within the Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch plays an important role in foreign policy via its oversight and appropriation functions. While additional Members of Congress may emerge as influential during our campaign, we will focus our initial efforts on the House and Senate Leadership and members of the following Congressional committees:

- House Committee on Foreign Affairs
- House Committee on Appropriations
- House Committee on Armed Services
- House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
- Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
- Senate Committee on Appropriations
- Senate Committee on Armed Services
- Senate Committee on Select Committee on Intelligence

5. Advocate within the Think Tank / Non-Government Organization Community

Finally, Washington is replete with “think tanks” and other NGOs that are extremely influential because they are populated by experts from previous and future administrations. Indeed, think tanks have been described as “governments in waiting”, and they influence each level of the U.S. foreign policy process.

For example, John Podesta, President Clinton's former Chief of Staff, and Director of President Obama's Transition Team, is the founder and President of the Center for American Progress. While Mr. Podesta has returned to the Center, several of his colleagues have since joined the Obama Administration. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, was previously a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Michele Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, was previously the President of the Center for a New American Security ("CNAS"). Her former CNAS colleague, Kurt Campbell, is rumored to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. Notably, Richard Holbrook, Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, was President of the Asia Society and is a prominent member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the premier foreign policy think tank in the U.S. Numerous other examples exist, and we will delve deep into these and other NGOs to build support for our effort. Potential targets include:

- Council on Foreign Relations
- Center for Strategic and International Studies
- Center for American Progress
- Center for a New American Security
- Brookings Institution
- Heritage Foundation
- American Enterprise Institute
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- Middle East Institute
- Middle East Policy Council
- Asia Society
- Washington Center for Near East Policy
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Johns Hopkins University Foreign Policy Institute
- Nixon Center
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
- International Republican Institute
- Progressive Policy Institute

TEAM

The Patton Boggs team will be led by Nick Allard, David Dunn, David Tafuri and Robert Kapla. As appropriate we will supplement this core team with our deep bench of public policy attorneys, advisors, and cadre of foreign policy experts such as Joe Brand and Frank Samolis. Biographies for these team members are attached.

Our attorneys have staffed virtually every committee in the U.S. Congress, worked for senior Democratic and Republican Members of the House and Senate, and served in the past six U.S.

administrations, including the Obama Administration. As a result, Patton Boggs has a deep and broad experience in working with nearly every U.S. Government department and agency, and the U.S. Congress.

CONCLUSION

This represents our initial strategy on your behalf. It would be our honor to represent you in your efforts to promote alternatives in Afghanistan that will lead to sustainable security, transparency, and economic prosperity for the Afghan people. We would be happy to discuss this proposal with you in greater detail.

Attachments

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