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**Office of the Secretary of the Department of Defense –  
Progress Report on Pretexts for U.S. Military  
Intervention in Afghanistan by 2002**

12 June, 2000

OPI: DOD-CLASSIFICATION

[REDACTED]

Classified By: [REDACTED] DOD [REDACTED]

Reason: 1.4(c)

Declassify On: 20391231

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

12 June 2000

## REPORT FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Progress Report on Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Afghanistan (TS)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have submitted the attached Report for the Secretary of Defense. The Report responds to a request from the office for a progress report on the creation of pretexts to justify U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan.
2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff submits this Report to start the active planning phase for a U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan.

### FOREWORD

The office requested a progress report concerning the creation of pretexts to justify U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan. The Report highlights strategic advantages that the U.S. holds vis-a-vis Afghanistan which should be capitalized on, considers emergent weaknesses in U.S. force structure, highlights political considerations which possibly constrain direct U.S. action, and gives an estimated time frame for the scenarios detailed within. The Report will then summarize recent developments and expound on candidate scenarios which the Joint Chiefs believe can offer a pretext for intervention.

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## **SUMMARY OF U.S. STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES IN CENTRAL ASIA**

Military operations over Iraq during the Gulf War serve as a preeminent example of the U.S. ability to project force in the Middle East and Western Asia. The theater served as a test ground for the deployment and operation of several new combat systems, including the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ABM system.

U.S. force planners are aware of the strategic advantage held by our armed forces in long range stand-off weapons. It is important to capitalize on these advantages and degrade the adversary's ability to respond at all levels of escalation.

In contrast to Iraq, which is bordered by states whose infrastructure can facilitate and support a U.S. aerial bombing campaign, the country of Afghanistan poses a challenge to proper forward deployment of U.S. forces because it is a landlocked country which borders states that do not host U.S. military installations, either due to a history of nationalist feelings or due to fielding sufficiently strong armed forces in the case of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

It is known and expected that the government of the PRC would pressure the Pakistani government to reject such a proposal. Therefore, secondary measures must be taken to ensure that U.S. interests in the region are protected. The Joint Chiefs of Staff propose suitable measures which are listed in items 3(a) – 3(e).

A large-scale invasion of Afghanistan has an estimated time frame of four to six months for preparation. This aligns with the time frame which preceded the combat phase of U.S. involvement in the Gulf War. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary that U.S. forces drill for the invasion of Afghanistan and address these weaknesses and limitations detailed in the discussion.

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