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DRAFT 9/20/01 8:50pm

Memo

For: Secretary of Defense  
From: Douglas J. Feith  
Subject: Briefing President on Operational Plan

Suggested talking points:

I. Introductory remarks

- Gen. Franks and his team have worked hard.
- They've thought boldly and creatively.
- They're brave military officers whose plan entails serious risks, including the use of ground forces in Afghanistan.
- They deserve thanks and respect.
  
- I want to put this briefing in perspective.
- There is more than one set of guidelines that could govern the development of our plan of operations.
- A particular set of guidelines was given to Gen. Franks and he created as good a plan as could be devised on that basis.
- But even before you hear the plan, I want to state: You will find it disappointing. I did.
- Not the fault of Gen. Franks.
  
- Gen. Franks and his planners were operating with three key limitations:
  1. Requirement to initiate military *strikes* within a very short time.
  2. Focus on al-Qaida in Afghanistan.
  3. [REDACTED]
  
- After reviewing the plan, I have concluded that these limitations make it impossible for Gen. Franks (or anyone) to propose initial military action that comports with the President's concept of a

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broad and sustained effort against international terrorists and the states that support them.

- Gen. Franks will now brief his plan.
- I'll then want to review some of the remarks from the discussion that followed the plan's review yesterday by Paul Wolfowitz and me in the tank with the Joint Chiefs.
- Then I'll suggest a way ahead.

## GEN. FRANKS' BRIEFING

### II. Post-Briefing Remarks – The Critique

- Fundamental problem with the plan: We don't have good options for producing important effects in Afghanistan.

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- This operation will not likely produce impressive results.
  - Can't be confident that Taliban or al-Qaida leadership or forces will be captured or damaged severely.
  - The greatest risk in Special Forces action is that we may come up empty-handed. Can't count on finding proof of chemical weapons production in the fertilizer factory that is our prime target. During the Vietnam War, we executed a tactically brilliant raid on a suspect POW facility at Sontay, but the intelligence was stale and there were no POWs there when we go there.
  - If the initial U.S. military action is not confidence-inspiring, it could undermine our entire effort.
  - (1) Bombing for a few days; (2) not destroying anything of high value (there's nothing of high value in all of

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Afghanistan); (3) attacking a suspected chemical weapons facility that may turn out to be a mere commercial factory – none of this reflects the distinctive policies and frame of mind of the George W. Bush Administration. None of this gives substance to the President's pledge of a broad and sustained war against terror and state support for terror.

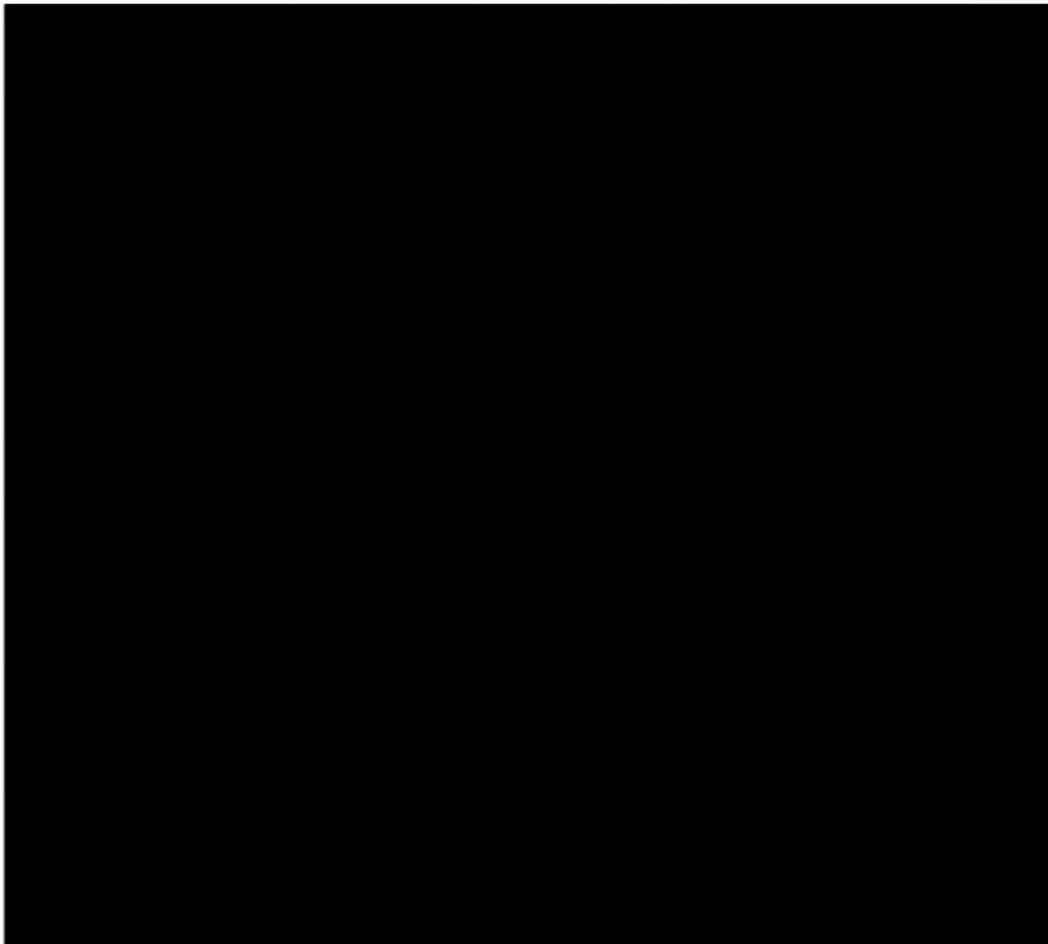
- It might be possible to intervene more directly in the Taliban war with the Northern Alliance, e.g. by deploying U.S. direct support with Apaches or other capabilities to take out the Taliban's armor capability. However, that is a course of action that requires more strategic/operational analysis and much better intelligence than I've seen so far.

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#### IV. Conclusion

- We needed to see what the plan would look on the basis of the initial guidelines. We have now seen it.
- If we can revise the guidelines, I am confident I can return within a week or so with a broader plan, better suited to the large task we have to deal with international terrorism.

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