

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2009 7:15 AM
To: 'JilotyLC@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: Troops

pls print.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mark J. Penn <[REDACTED]>
To: H
Sent: Thu Oct 08 03:26:41 2009
Subject: Troops

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I have to say that this argument that the Taliban are ok to ignore is dangerous morally and politically.

The argument at the time was that harboring terrorism was the same as launching terrorism and that those who harbored would be held responsible. This also had long term deterrence value against regimes that would outsource the dirty work.

To now even consider giving the Taliban a pass after harboring terrorists who committed direct attacks on new York and Washington defies the imagination. This wasn't some embassy bombing but a strike right at our country. The white house or congress barely escaped destruction. Saddam Hussein wasn't connected to al Qaeda but the Taliban surely were without question.

And Teheran and north Korea are watching carefully, gauging how much resolve the us has in stopping their plans. If the us lets the Taliban off the hook then they certainly can conclude it will do nothing beyond sanctions with them. And essentially letting karzai twist in the wind also suggests the us does not live up to it's commitments, giving pause to those who would help the us.

Politically, this is also quite dangerous. Obama maintained througout the campaign and the start of his presidency that this is the one to fight and backing down here makes him and the administration vulnerable to losing moderate support and seeming weak and indecisive.

A single terrorist incident would be blamed on the admin. failing to do the job right.

I could go on and on with other negative ramifications but of all the options it appears to me any strategy that says fighting the taliban are not in the strategic interests of the us should be doa.