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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 CIAE-00 EA-10 DODE-00 MMO-01
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FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1064
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0034

C O N F I D E N T I A L PESHAWAR 0349

ICA FOR VOA/BC

E.O. 12065: GDS- 4/26/88 (ARCHARD, D.B.) OR-M
TAGS: PINS, PEPR, SOPN, AF
SUBJECT: PUBLICIZING AFGHANISTAN: A JOURNALIST CANDIDATE

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.
2. AN AUSTRALIAN PHOTO-JOURNALIST, JOHN MONFRIES, HAS JUST RETURNED HERE AFTER SIX WEEKS IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN. MONFRIES WAS BASED JUST OUTSIDE MAZAR-I-SHARIF IN BALKH PROVINCE WITH THE JAMIAT ISLAMI ORGANIZATION. ALTHOUGH FAIRLY NEW TO JOURNALISM, MONFRIES NONETHELESS IS A MILITARY VETERAN WHO IS A GOOD AND ARTICULATE OBSERVER. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, HE IS THE FIRST ENGLISH-SPEAKING WESTERNER TO VISIT THE NORTHERN AFGHAN STEPPE SINCE THE AFGHAN WAR BEGAN. WE THINK HE WOULD MAKE AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE FOR PUBLICIZING THE AFGHANISTAN ISSUE IN THE WEST.
3. MONFRIES, WHO IS TWENTY EIGHT, ENTERED AFGHANISTAN FROM NORTH WAZIRISTAN, AND CROSSED PAKTIA, LOGAR, WARDAK, BAMIYAN, / AND SAMANGAN PROVINCES ENROUTE TO BALKHN A THIRTY THREE DAY TREK THROUGH DEEP SNOW IN LATE JANUARY--EARLY MARCH. HIS RETURN VIA THE SAME ROUTE TOOK ONLY TWLEVE DAYS AFTER THE

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SNOWS MELTED. WHILE IN BALKH, HE TWICE ENTERED MAZAR TO WITNESS MUJAHADIN ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT INSTALLATIONS AND

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PERSONNEL. HE REPORTS ON A SELF-CONFIDENT, ALBEIT POORLY TRAINED, MUJAHADIN ORGANIZATION IN BALKH WHICH APPARENTLY FEELS LITTLE THREAT FROM THE ENEMY.

4. BESIDES HIS PHOTOGRAPHS, MONFRIES HAS A WELL-FILLED NOTEBOOK WHICH SHOWS PROMISE OF PROVIDING A NUMBER OF ARTICLES WITH SOME EDITORIAL GUIDANCE. FURTHER, WE THINK THE MAN WOULD PROBABLY DO WELL ON A TELEVISION PROGRAM.

5. JOHN MONFRIES EXPECTS TO BE IN THIS AREA ANOTHER WEEK OR SO BEFORE HEADING FOR LONDON TO DEVELOP AND MARKET HIS FILM. FROM THERE, HE WOULD BE WILLING TO CROSS THE ATLANTIC TO HELP PUBLICIZE THE CAUSE. WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT INQUIRE OF ONE OR MORE OF AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN AFGHANISTAN TO DETERMINE IF THEY WISH TO FUND MONFRIES' TRAVEL.

6. FURTHER, IF APPROPRIATE, WE SUGGEST DEPARTMENT CONTACT ANY OF FOLLOWING U.S. JOURNALISTS TO CALL MONFRIES TO THEIR ATTENTION. WE KNOW FOLLOWING ARE INTERESTED IN AFGHANISTAN:

JOE DE COLA AT NBC TV IN NEW YORK.
JOHN WALCOTT AT NEWSWEEK IN WASHINGTON.
DAN RATHER AT CBS IN NEW YORK.
DICK DUNCAN AT TIME IN NEW YORK.

IF ANY ARE CONTACTED, DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO SAY I HAVE TALKED AT LENGTH WITH MONFRIES AND FIND HIM A CREDIBLE, INFORMED OBSERVER.

7. DETAILED, SUBSTANTIVE SEPTTEL FOLLOWS.

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8. FOREGOING COORDINATED WITH BPAO DAVIDSON. ARCHARD

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