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July 24, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

I am in receipt of Asst. Secretary David Adams' July 17 response to my June 13 letter to you concerning Chinese involvement in the energy development of northern Afghanistan. Problems remain which trouble me and which Mr. Adams did not adequately address.

You make the point that the award of the Amu Darya Basin contract to China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) was an "Afghan-led" process. You say that the Department of Defense Task Force for Business Stability Operations "was not directly involved in the selection of the contract." So the decision was made by President Karzai and his Cabinet. That CNPC had conveniently entered into a "partnership" with a Karzai family firm is not mentioned. The Watan Group has no experience in developing oil and gas fields, but it does have experience trading on its family ties to the Afghan president to get business. CNPC has years of experience dealing with corrupt regimes across the Third World and knew exactly what to do in Afghanistan.

The issue is not simply wanting American firms to win contracts. We have been fighting in Afghanistan for strategic, not commercial, reasons. CNPC's main rival for the bid was a British firm which would not have raised any similar concern. That the American firm Schlumberger will be providing oil field services does not reduce the strategic danger because it will not be the entity that runs the project. Schlumberger has a long history of working with CNPC, providing the Chinese with technology they do not possess. On the strategic level, Schlumberger is more a part of the problem than a solution; as its collaboration enables China to expand its capabilities.

The Chinese victory in the bidding for the Aynak copper mine must have been even more corrupt than the CNPC bid. You made a point in your letter of explaining that the Aynak deal was made "before the restructuring of the Ministry of Mining and Industry" which means when things were even worse than now in Kabul.

I was happy to read at the end of Mr. Adams letter that there is an interest in a broader dialogue with the democratic opposition and civil society. Unfortunately, this has taken the form

of meetings with western-sponsored NGOs and fabricated “civil society” groups. Meanwhile, the only viable alternative to the Karzai administration, the Northern Alliance, is being ignored. Yet no coalition has a better record of fighting the Taliban to defend their communities. During the pre-9/11 civil war, it was the Northern Alliance that was in the field; and after 9/11 they are the ones who fought at our side. The Karzai family had fled the country. Will they do so again, this time with the bags of money they have amassed over the last decade? The Karzai family is a weak reed to lean on as our strategic rivals mobilize and we pull back.

You made no mention of the China-Pakistan alliance. China’s investments in Afghanistan cannot be understood without such a reference. You did mention “the fiscal sustainability of the Afghan state” to which Chinese money is supposed to contribute. This kind of stability is only important to the United States if the Afghan state is in the hands of leaders friendly to the United States. Rising Chinese influence in Afghanistan, in league with a Pakistan whose de facto military rulers want to dominate the country, will produce a Kabul government hostile to America. The resulting stability will be the kind we already see in Iran, Syria, Venezuela and Sudan where CNPC is also active as an agent of Beijing’s strategy and the economic support for local dictators.

We went to Afghanistan to prevent that land from being used by terrorists. Chinese influence will help bring to power in Kabul a regime aligned with Pakistan, which is itself a terrorist state. Islamabad’s support for the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Haqqani Network (among other groups) means Afghanistan is destined to become a base for violence once again directed at India and Central Asia, as well as at American and European interests. Chinese state-owned firms are willing to invest in Afghanistan when others fear to do so because Beijing expects a Pakistan dominion which will protect their economic interests while furthering their strategic interests.

Once again, we will have fielded the best army in the world; one that can win any tactical battle. Yet, we are losing the war on the strategic level to forces that are materially inferior, but whose leaders are focused on strategic outcomes beyond what can even be imagined by the Obama administration. Thousands of lives and trillions of dollars will have been wasted as we see our geopolitical arch-rivals pick up the pieces we leave behind.

Sincerely,



Dana Rohrabacher  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs