

~~SECRET CLOSE HOLD~~

6 May, 2002  
3:00PM

## U.S. Role in the Gardez Situation

- **Scene Setting:**

- Gardez and Khwost remain a tangle of intra-Pashtun fighting.
- No clearly dominant local "warlord" (order is good in locales where dominant commanders exist).
- Karzai appointed Pacha Khan as governor of Gardez; appointment rejected by Gardez Shura (council).
- Pacha Khan retaliates with shelling and attacks on Gardez.
- AIA Chairman Karzai issues (30 April) ultimatum to Pacha Khan: "surrender and leave the area or be annihilated."
- AIA military option: dispatch 1,200 man Pashtun force commanded by General Shir Alam. Still in the planning stage.
- Karzai has, more or less, boxed himself in. What should the U.S. role be?

- **Basic thoughts on the U.S. Role:**

- Continue basic mission to root out remaining Taliban and al-Qaida forces.
- We should be careful about expanding that basic mission.
- We want to leave Afghanistan in better shape than we found it.
- But we do not want to do anything now to antagonize Afghans and make it more difficult to complete the basic mission.

- **Key Policy Points:**

- We have a stake in the success of the Afghan Interim Government.
- So what's the best way to help them out while serving the broader U.S. interest?

~~Classified By: Dr. William J. Luti, DASD NESA~~  
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- Tough love: say to Karzai:
  - "We can not tell you whether to settle the Pacha Khan problem politically (e.g., with money, concessions) or by force.
  - "That's a judgment you [Karzai] will have to make."
  - "We can advise that if you use force, it's best to do it right."
  - "But do not count on us to bail you out militarily."
- **Why not use U.S. forces?**
  - Would divert limited resources from our main mission to root out remaining terrorists.
  - Would foster dependency on the U.S. making it difficult for U.S. to withdraw from Afghanistan without the country falling back into internecine war.
  - Better for Karzai to use his own resources (wisely) and to prove his mettle.
  - If we throw American power around between Afghan factions:
    - We will likely be viewed as an invading force.
    - Find it more difficult to achieve our basic mission.
- **Proposed U.S. Role/Mission:**
  - Make it clear we are not Karzai's enforcer.
  - But put U.S. SOF and Civil Affairs team with Fahim's force. Purpose:
    - Maintain situational awareness.
    - Provide humanitarian assistance.
    - Consult with Fahim on his plan. If poor plan, help make it better.
    - Not perform military mission or provide advice on how to fight.

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- **Final Analysis:**

- If we do it once (intervene in internecine Afghan fights), we will find ourselves doing it again and again.
- Will be a major expansion of the U.S. mission (mission leap, not mission creep).
- Will create a dependency on the U.S., setting the U.S. up for the blame if Afghanistan falls apart after we leave.
- Will antagonize the Afghans making it difficult to complete the basic U.S. mission.