



Karzai: Afghan Regime Would Back Pakistan Against U.S. in War

Afghan "President" Hamid Karzai, who rose to power with massive U.S. assistance, promised that the regime ruling Afghanistan would support the Pakistani government if a war broke out between America and Pakistan.

"God forbid, if ever there is a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan," Karzai [said](#) during an interview with Pakistan's Geo television. "If Pakistan is attacked and if the people of Pakistan needs Afghanistan's help, Afghanistan will be there with you."



Other governments such as India (population: 1.2 billion) would also face the wrath of Afghanistan's pitiful military if they decided to wage war. "Anybody that attacks Pakistan, Afghanistan will stand with Pakistan," insisted Karzai, who clings to power in Kabul largely because of the U.S.-led occupation of the nation. "Afghanistan will never betray its brother."

After news of Karzai's remarks swept through the Western media, a spokesman for the presidential palace claimed the statements were taken out of context. "Pakistani media has misinterpreted it. They only showed the first part when the president says Afghanistan will back Pakistan if there is a war," the official insisted, claiming Karzai was talking about his regime's willingness to accept Pakistani refugees if needed.

The spokesman did not totally repudiate the remarks, however. "In connection with the war on terrorism, if there is a war on Pakistan, Afghanistan will not support that," he [told](#) the *Hindustan Times*.

Of course, American officials in Kabul were not amused. "This is not about war with each other," U.S. Embassy spokesman Gavin Sundwall [told](#) reporters, noting that the Afghan government would have to explain Karzai's statements. "This is about a joint approach to a threat to all three of our countries: insurgents and terrorists who attack Afghans, Pakistanis, and Americans."

Analysts, however, had varied reactions to the remarks. Some ridiculed the notion that Karzai's regime — which could not even withstand internal challenges without Western support — would be capable of standing against its chief sponsor. Others said the U.S.-backed Afghan ruler was probably just grandstanding and trying to build up good will among Pakistanis.

At least one commentator argued that the President's remarks illustrated how much resentment American policies have created. "Karzai's statement was a little surprising considering the Afghan-Pakistani relationship has soured in recent weeks due to cross-border raids and accusations of each that the other is orchestrating cross-border attacks," [noted](#) John Glaser with Antiwar.com. "The fact that Karzai would still side with Pakistan in a fight with the US shows the extent to which US foreign policy has fomented anti-American sentiment in the region."



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 24, 2011

U.S. policy in the region has indeed been odd, to say the least. The Obama administration has practically been [begging](#) the Taliban insurgency to negotiate almost a decade after American forces deposed the regime.

But the Islamic group, once a close U.S. ally, has steadfastly refused — even with massive concessions on the table. “We are winning, why should we negotiate?” a high-ranking Taliban official [stated](#) last year.

Top Obama administration officials last month [accused](#) the Pakistani regime — which receives billions of dollars in U.S. aid every year — of aiding groups like the Haqqani network that are attacking American forces in Afghanistan. Senior U.S. lawmakers even began beating the war drums against the nuclear-armed regime in Islamabad, while others threatened to cut off American military aid.

But Karzai’s statements came at a particularly tense moment. Days before his controversial remarks, [reports](#) of U.S. forces amassing along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan were raising alarm bells worldwide.

It now appears likely that the operation was [designed](#) to capture or assassinate members of the Haqqani network operating in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan rather than launch an assault on Pakistani territory. But the armed forces of Pakistan have stated clearly and repeatedly that any more armed U.S. incursions into the nation would be met with force.

NATO refused to offer precise details about the U.S. troops and weaponry buildup along the border. A spokesman for the alliance confirmed, however, that “a number” of “insurgents” and “additional fighters” had been detained or killed inside Afghanistan.

Speaking from Islamabad, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also mentioned the operations in the border area. “Many dozens, if not into the hundreds, have been captured or killed on the Afghan side of the border,” she [claimed](#), demanding that Pakistani rulers do more to assist America’s terror war — or have the U.S. show them how.

According to most analysts, the chances of a war breaking out between the governments of Pakistan and the U.S. are remote — right now, at least. But for many years, some experts have been [predicting](#) that American forces would eventually invade Pakistan, probably under the guise of the terror war.

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Photo: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the Presidential Palace in Kabul, Afghanistan, Oct. 20, 2011. Clinton was calling for a new, three-way partnership between the U.S., Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight insurgents and bring back into society those fighters willing to accept clear guidelines: AP Images



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